

SLOVENIAN INDEPENDENCE:
A CASE STUDY OF SUCCESS

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

ROK KOSIRNIK, CPT, SLOVENIAN ARMY

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1996

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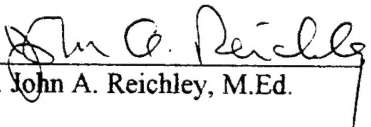
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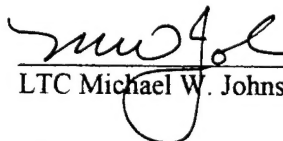
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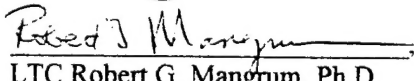
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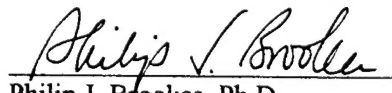
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ABSTRACT

INDEPENDENT SLOVENIA: A CASE STUDY OF SUCCESS by CPT (P) Rok Kosirnik.
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This thesis investigates the main reasons for Slovenian secession, political scene in former Yugoslavia prior to secession, how it actually happened, and the role of international diplomacy in recognizing the Republic of Slovenia.

Slovenia is a forgotten survivor of the Yugoslav wars, even for many academics who work on southeastern Europe. Slovenes are rarely invited to conferences on solving the Yugoslav crisis. This is ironic because many from the former Yugoslav republics say that Slovenia started the dissolution process not only by seceding on July 25, 1991, but also by succeeding in developing its economy and civil society in the 1980s to the point where seceding may have been the only viable choice.

This study explains that the Slovene independence was not the cause of Yugoslav disintegration, but rather the result of it. Author tries to answer the question whether the ethnic conflict in former Yugoslavia is primordial or instrumental, that is whether it is endemic to a region populated with South Slav peoples, or a product of a elite manipulation. The authors opinion is that the ethnic conflict in former Yugoslavia resulted from the irresponsible behavior of unscrupulous politicians, who had played the ethnical card.

Slovene willingness to live with other South Slav people in a common state was, after 1918 as well as after 1945, is an indisputable fact. But it is also a fact that Yugoslavia did not fall apart because of lack of unity, rather it happened because of intolerance and, even more, Serbian incapacity to accept Yugoslavia's ethnic and cultural diversity as a reality and a benefit.

The only viable solution for Slovenes in 1991 was decision for the independent state. There were at least three contributing factors which helped Slovenes to declare its independence and survive: ethnic homogeneity, economic development, strong civil society, and decision supported by the majority of population to fight any kind of aggression on their newly declared state.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project is dedicated to my son Nejc who I missed very much during this year and who was always with me in my thoughts; to Natasa who had to raise and take care of him all on her own; and to my mother who paid enormous telephone bills and provided me with encouragement in my times of trouble.

Special thanks to Mr. John A. Reichley and my other comites members for their time, assistance, and patience in guiding me.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On June 25, 1991, Slovenia became legally independent by the Basic Constitutional Charter of Sovereign Independence of the Republic of Slovenia. Throughout their 12 centuries of existence, Slovenes had never lived in an independent state. The thousand-year-old dream of Slovenes was fulfilled. The federal government in Belgrade decided to oppose Slovenia's independence by all means--including force of arms. The intentions of federal authorities were to affirm the territorial extent of the federation, deny Slovenia the right to secede, and bring it back into the federal fold. Military intervention was scheduled to start on June 27, 1991, early in the morning. Initially, federal troops planned to encircle the Slovenian capital city, then seize its airport and all border posts along the Austrian and Italian borders.¹ In the early morning hours of July 27, 1991, columns of tanks and armored vehicles of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) moved out of the barracks with the mission to discipline and subdue the Slovenian nation. Slovenian Territorial Defense (STD) forces intervened and erected barricades and roadblocks all around the country.

Slovenian President Milan Kucan called on all citizens, officers, and soldiers to resist the aggression against the Slovenian people. The federal government in Belgrade answered with an ultimatum stating that all resistance to federal forces would be broken.²

The Slovenes resisted en masse and organized. Soldiers of the Slovenian Territorial Defense were outnumbered and poorly armed, yet they fought effectively against what was supposed to be the fourth largest Army in the Europe at the time. At border passings clashes took place with the Territorial Defense and police forces when heliborne and airborne operations were

conducted with armored support. The JNA seized a dozen border crossings, but 15 remained under Slovenian control. Fighting was fierce and, by the morning of June 28, the situation was still extremely confused. JNA armored reinforcements attempted to enter from Croatia but were repelled. The federal troops' situation became more and more desperate. Most of the JNA barracks and troops outside were surrounded, cut off, badly led, and in very bad shape in general. Federal troops were told that they had to protect Slovenia's borders from intervention from Austria and Italy. They were misinformed and without any real knowledge about what was going on. They were led mainly by Serb officers and many non-Serbian born conscripts chose to desert and return home.

On July 7, 1991, all the involved parties and representatives of the European Community signed the "Brioni Declaration." Representatives of both sides agreed on a ceasefire, and Slovenian negotiators pledged that Slovenia would delay all independence actions for three months. Shortly after the "Brioni Declaration" was signed the JNA unilaterally decided to move out from Slovenia until the end of October.

The JNA had paid a heavy price and could no longer be regarded as a national army embracing all Yugoslavia's constituent nationalities. Defeated and humiliated after its failure, it all but broke up, and soon became solely Serbia's army, serving one people only.

Basic Facts About Slovenia (Statistical Yearbook of Slovenia 1992):

1. Slovenia is a central European country, bordering in the north with Austria, in the west with Italy, in the south with Croatia and in the east with Hungary.
2. Area.....20,251 sq.km.
3. Population (1992).....1,965,986.
4. Population density.....98.6/square kilometre.
5. Population growth.....1.1/1000.
6. Ethnic Slovenes.....91 percent.

7. Religion- Roman Catholic.....93 percent.
8. GNP per capita (1994).....6.960 US dollars.
9. Political system.....parliamentary democracy.
10. Climate.....continental, Alpine and Mediterranean.

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to explain the main reasons for Slovenian secession from Yugoslavia and how it actually happened.

Secondary Questions

1. What is the historical framework of Slovenian striving for independence?
2. What was the political situation in Slovenia and Yugoslavia in the late 1980's and what were crucial political decisions which led to independence ?
3. How did the war start and how was it won?
4. What was the role of international diplomacy?
5. What are the prospects of Slovenia in the future?

Definition of Terms

The Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) emerged as a new state after World War II. It had six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and two autonomous provinces within Serbia, Vojvodina and Kosovo. The division into federal units was not meant to divide the country but to create as equitable a balance as possible between Yugoslavia's people and to prevent conflict over disputed territories. Borders between republics were drawn up on a mixture of ethnic and historic principles. In this way, Macedonians won recognition of their separate national identity and their own republic. Montenegro, too, became a republic in its own right in respect to its independent history, while Bosnia-Hercegovina maintained its former Ottoman counturs including a segment of the Adriatic

cost. The border between Croatia and Vojvodina meandered among villages depending on whether they had a Croat or Serb majority. Kosovo became an autonomous region and Vojvodina an autonomous province within Serbia because of the large non-Serb population living there.³ Hence Tito's communist regime gave more solid foundation to Yugoslavia, even if it did not actually solve her national questions. It was a federal state of equal nationalities ruled by the communist party. The highest authority in the land was Josip Broz Tito and his trusted communist followers. Despite its federal structure Yugoslavia was, if anything, more unitary and centralist than it had been under King Alexander. What had changed was the concept of Yugoslavism. Tito had been the Yugoslav president for almost 35 years when he died in 1980. Ten years after his death, Yugoslavia began to break apart along ethnic lines.

The Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) has played a disastrous role not only as an enforcer of political decisions but as an independent agent. In Tito's time the army had only a subordinate political role, although officers were required to be loyal members of the communist party. The ethnic composition of top army officers was predominantly Serb. The JNA had been billed as the fourth largest in Europe, equipped with the most modern Western and Eastern bloc armaments, and supported by a huge domestic arms industry as well.⁴ The JNA was a conscript army. The officers' corps was professional and Serb officers had the main influence and held the majority of command positions. Conscripts had to serve in the federal army for 12 months and after that they were members of army reserve units. Yugoslav army units were mainly ethnically mixed and when the war broke out there were still quite a lot Slovenian soldiers in them.

Federal police members were sent to Slovenia to be customs officers at Slovenian border crossings shortly after the Slovenes declared their independence. In the SFRJ there were two different police forces, those of the republics and the federal police. Federal police were in charge to intervene if mass riots or any kind of urgent situation would take place. After its independence declaration, Slovenia took control over its borders and border posts and that was reason enough

for deploying federal troops and federal police forces. The federal police members were mainly Serbs.

Slovenian police forces were loyal to the Slovene government and fought together with territorial defense forces. Their role during the war for independence was as important as the role of regular units. They were fighting the enemy together.

All monetary figures are in US dollars.

Limitations

This thesis will be mainly a "Slovene point of view." Not a lot of resources about actual events except newspapers, articles, and short surveys are available in English. As far as the Slovene War for Independence is concerned almost all resources will be limited to Slovene literature, articles from Slovene newspapers, and documentation from Slovene libraries. Documents, reports, and any kind of literature from the "other side," except quotations in secondary resources, were not available for many reasons.

Delimitations

This thesis is not just an analysis of Slovenian secession. It broadly covers the history of the Slovene nation from the early days until 1996. A short history of the former Yugoslavia and political relations between the Republic of Slovenia and other constitutive parts of the former Yugoslavia are included as well. However it is not a study of the former Yugoslavia and does not research the reasons for the "bloodiest war" after World War II in Europe although it indicates the main reasons for break up and touches the pattern of events which led to the war. The current conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina is not the subject of this thesis as well, although the main reasons for war are indicated. This thesis does not analyze the present situation in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Significance of the Study

Slovenia is a young four-year-old emerging democracy. It was the first republic to break apart from the Socialistic Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and gain its independence, and it is the only one without any significant problems and with good prospects for the future. While reading books available in English about the current issues in the Balkans, discussing the "hot" topics with colleagues, and listening to official explanations for the bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia, the author realized that in general the majority of them were wrong. They were much too simple and really handy for covering the mistakes of international diplomacy. When there still was time for preventive diplomacy and deterring the potential conflict, nobody was prepared to listen to cries for help from the former Yugoslavia. After that it was too late and now the easiest way to explain it is to blame religion, hundreds of years of animosities among respective nations, and so called "new tribalism" which erupted in Europe after the end of the Cold War. But the real reasons are not explained. Furthermore, many times the independence of Slovenia is misunderstood and its secession from Yugoslavia is accused of being the main reason for the tragedy that took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina. That is the main reason for this thesis and an explanation of events which led to the decision for the Slovenian secession. They could be applied on the rest of the former Yugoslavia because the pattern, main players, and reasons were the same.

Another reason is that Slovenia is a member of the Partnership for Peace Program (the only member from the former Yugoslavia) and hopes to become a fully recognized member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Military relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Slovenia will in the future hopefully become more intensive and as a result quite a few U.S. Army officers will visit or have an opportunity to work with Slovene officers. This thesis offers a short, compact insight of Slovene history and recent events in former Yugoslavia and will hopefully help readers to understand the Slovene cause and the Slovene point of view.

There are quite a few books in English dealing with the Balkans available, but almost none of them are devoted entirely to Slovenia's decision for secession and independence. This

thesis will therefore hopefully broaden military and general knowledge about that particular part of Europe and fulfill the gap in military literature in the Combined Arms Research Library. Last but not least it will help students and other military persons at the CGSC obtain general information about Slovenia and its armed forces.

Endnotes

¹Eric Micheletti and Yves Debay, War in The Balkans (Paris, France: History & Collections, 1993), 7.

²Ibid., 7.

³Christopher Bennett, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 53.

⁴Paul Mojzes, Yugoslavian Inferno (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), 164.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Current State of Publications. There is a shortage of information about Slovenia. The Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) does not have any resources dealing exclusively with the Slovenian War for Independence and the events which led to it. In fact no resources to date in English which are focused on Slovenia and its secession with the exception of the "Independent Slovenia," a collection of essays edited by Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft, are available. There are few books on Yugoslavia, its history, and recent events there; and they only touch the Slovene problem occasionally, but none of them go into detail and the Slovenian secession plays only a minor role in them. Works in English that were especially valuable for this project are:

1. Mojzes, Paul. *Yugoslavian Inferno*. N.Y.: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994.
2. Cohen, Leonard. *Broken Bonds: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*. Oxford: Westview Press, 1993.
3. Gow, James. *Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis*. New York and London: St.Martin's/Pinter, 1992.
4. Bennet, Christoper. *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse*. N.Y.: University Press, 1995.
5. Woodward, Susan L. *Balkan Tragedy*. Washington D.C.: The Brooking institution, 1995.
6. Larrabee, F.Stephen. *The Volatile Powder Keg*. Washington D.C.: The American University Press: 1994.
7. Magas, Branka. *The Destruction of Yugoslavia, 1980-92*. London: Verso 1992.

The collection of essays edited by Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft, with the title Independent Slovenia. (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1994), represent a very good insight into Slovenian history, culture, and economy.

All relevant resources about the fighting during the war are available only in the Slovenian language. Research in Slovenia produced no after action reports or dairies or planning documents from operational headquarters of the Slovenian Territorial Defense from that period. This can be explained by the shortage of time available for research and by the fact that preparations for potential conflict took place in secret. During the actual conflict there were probably many much more important things to do than to document operations. There was no historical office. Relevant works available are thus only books written by actual participants at the time and short newspaper articles which were of minimal use to this thesis. That is the reason why this thesis covers the actual fighting only on broad lines and does not go into detail.

Another problem is that during research no documents were available from the "other side". There are probably a lot of comments, reports, and articles available in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but because of relations between the two countries getting those resources was totally unrealistic. Analyses of that documentation, which will probably be available sometime in the future, will be a good topic for another thesis.

Key Works. The most important works on this topic were published by leading Slovene politicians at the time. Janez Jansa, former Minister of the Defense; Igor Bavcar, former Minister of Internal Affairs; Dr.Miha Brejc, former Chief of the Slovene Intelligence Agency; and Dr.Dimitrij Rupel, former Minister for Foreign Affairs have all published significant literature on the events.

Newspaper Articles. Quite a lot of newspaper articles dealing with the actual events are available in the Combined Arms Research Library. At least 43 of them were found. The problem is that they are too general or they cover only one single event. They were not very important for

this thesis, but they are very interesting and useful for understanding the attitude of the rest of the Western world towards the Slovenian cause.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK AND BACKGROUND

The Slovenes are the earliest mentioned Slavic people (because their name is synonymous with the generic name for all Slavs), but they had the shortest period of independence. Slovenes first settled their present corner of Europe, once a part of the Roman Empire, in the middle of the sixth century. Here, early in the next century, they established a political entity, Karantania, whose center was near present day Klagenfurt (Celovec), Austria. Historically, Karantania was the only state Slovenes can claim as their own. Even then, however, the duke was a vassal to the Moravian ruler. In A.D. 745 an era of sterner domination by Bavaria and the Franks, which ended in the twelfth century, began. By the ninth century the space Slovenes inhabited was more than double Slovenia's present size and included much of central Austria. War and the emigration of peoples gradually diminished its size.¹

In the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries most Slovene lands became a part of the Habsburg feudal domain, a relationship that existed to 1918. As subjects of the Habsburg ruler, Slovenes lived in the duchies of Carniola, Styria, Carinthia, the county of Gorizia, the Mergravate of Istria, and the city of Trieste. On the western and eastern peripheries Slovene settlements were often under Venetian and Hungarian jurisdiction. By the time Slovenes had become Habsburg subjects they had long since become a dependent people. They had no ruling class. They had been made serfs by feudal nobles, both secular and clerical, and mostly German. They had been Christianized starting in the eighth century by Irish missionaries sent by the Bishop of Salzburg. The church's organization was formalized by the Franks in the wake of Charlemagne's conquest of the area.

In the Middle Ages, Slovenes belonged to a universal community, that of Western Christendom, their lands falling within the boundaries of the Holy Roman Empire. National cultural and political distinctions were of slight importance in such times.²

The Slovene national awakening occurred in the second half of the eighteenth century. It was part of an intellectual revolution known as the Enlightenment, which had begun transforming Western Europe in the previous century, and it was largely an outgrowth of and also a response to comprehensive reforms that the Habsburg rulers, especially Maria Theresa (1740-80) and Joseph II (1765-90), launched to centralize authority over their far-flung feudal possessions.

A powerful state required a modern defense system, and only tax paying peasantry could finance that requirement. For that reason peasants needed to be free and literate. Laws were passed making primary schooling compulsory. Latin as the language of government business--administration, law, judiciary, and so on was abandoned, and replaced by the German language. Most in the Empire would agree it made sense that laws be expressed in a comprehensible, secular language. But most also felt that language should be their own mother tongue. Obligating people to read and write made them aware of their worldly identity. It begat national consciousness.³

The quarter century from the time of French Revolution to the Congress of Vienna, 1789 to 1815, severely disrupted the lives of all Europeans, including the Slovenes. Many found themselves under French Imperial rule. In that four-year period, the lifespan of France's Illiryan provinces, its inhabitants were exposed to an enlightened French administration. The French encouraged the use of the local language, which for them was preferable to using German, the language of defeated Austria. Slovenes used the vernacular in schools, courts, newspapers, and textbooks. Some Slovenes were even included in the French administration, which had its seat in Ljubljana.⁴

The year 1848 brought dramatic upheaval across continental Europe. The Slovenes' first political program was formulated that year. The objective was clear and simple: a "United

Slovenia." The program called for the joining of all Slovene- inhabited lands of the empire into one administrative unit. It also demanded that Slovene, rather than German, be used in schools and administration, and it favored the separation of Austria from the German Confederation (Holy Roman Empire until 1806), which in 1848 seemed to be emerging as a German national state. Slovenes were not then, nor would they soon become, separatist. Nor had they become ardent Ilirians or Yugoslavs. More than a decade of absolutism and repression followed the revolutions of 1848.

In the 1850s and 1860s, as the result of several short wars, Austria had to concede power or territory to Italy, Prussia, and Hungary, all states that were using nationalistic appeals to enlarge their domains. Vienna gave up two valuable provinces, Lombardy and Venetia, to the newly created Kingdom of Italy, forfeited to Prussia/Germany its role as the dominant power in central Europe, and agreed to the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, which created the Dual Monarchy (Austria-Hungary). The latter enabled the Hungarians to assume legal authority over the southeastern parts of the Habsburg Empire. The Slovenes, one of Europe's less-developed nations, were divided territorial by these developments. Most remained in the Austrian half of the Habsburg state, but 27,000 found themselves in Italy after 1866 and 45,000 in Hungary after the Compromise of 1867. These numbers may not seem significant, but they were alarming to Slovenes whose population was only about 1.1 million.⁵

At the turn of the century Slovene society was quite different from what it had been in 1848. Most still lived in rural areas and worked the land, but legally all were free, for during the revolution the regime had abolished all remains of serfdom.

World War I began when Austria retaliated against Serbia for Archduke Ferdinand's assassination. Austria-Hungary and Serbs became adversaries in a conflict that would last four exhausting years. Slovenes, together with the empire's Croats and Serbs, were conscripted into the Austro-Hungarian army to fight Serbia. They would fight also on the Russian Front, and after Italy's entry into the war in 1915, there would be a Western Front as well. At the beginning of the

war a considerable number of Slovenes volunteered to serve in the Serbian army. Others joined later, often after deserting from the Austrian army while at the Russian Front where aversion to fighting fellow Slavs was often a factor. Slovenes fought with real self-interest only on the Western Front for Austria against Italy, because they were defending their own territory. The battleground, where Italian losses in major fighting in 1917 were catastrophic compared with those of Austria, straddles the current Italian-Slovene border.⁶

On October 29, 1918, the National Council, a recently formed body which spoke for the empire's Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, declared the establishment of a totally independent South Slave state. Serbs in new state were those in Croatia and the border between the newly formed state and Serbia was on the Drina river. The priest Anton Korošec, a cleric who had recently become to head the Slovene People's Party, was president of the National Council. The act, which separated the South Slavs from Austria, preceded the final collapse of the Habsburg state by more than two weeks. The political situation of Slovenes and other nations in a newly formed state was very difficult. Austrians on the North were demanding Slovenian ethnic territory, although 80 percent of the population was Slovenes. Italians on the West demanded another part of Slovenia and the Croatian region of Dalmacia, the coastline from Trieste to Split, as a reward for fighting on the side of the Entente Powers. The state of South Slavs was without a strong army necessary to defend the territory against Austrian and Italian aspirations. Politicians thought at the time that joining with the Kingdom of Serbia would improve their positions at a peace conference and help them retain their ethnical territories. Their expectations proved wrong. Another strong factor was that Serbs living in a new South Slavs state demanded unification with the Kingdom of Serbia. The new South Slav state, comprised of the Austro-Hungarian empire's Yugoslavs, joined with Serbia and Montenegro on November 24. The establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was announced on December 1, 1918, in Belgrade, capital of Serbia.

A United Slovenia had been the goal of Slovene politicians since 1848. It had not been attained within Austria, nor would it be realized in the first Yugoslavia. Essentially, it was the

Entente Powers that thwarted Slovene aspirations by supporting Italian claims to territories in the northern and eastern Adriatic, a price for being on the side of Entente during the war. By a treaty ratified at Rapallo in November 1920, nearly one-third of ethnic Slovenes came under Italian rule. Trieste had the largest Slovene urban population, just under 57,000 in 1910. The Entente Powers also enabled Austria, a successor state of the Habsburg Empire, to retain some ethnically Slovene lands. In a plebiscite held in southern Carinthia in October 1920, and supervised by Entente monitors, the vote favored affiliation with Austria. In the aftermath of World War I, prospects for the United Slovenia program seemed dimmer than ever. Slovenes in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes were spared the Italianizing and Germanizing pressures exerted on Italian and Austrian Slovenes, but their experience also fell far short of expectations. The South Slavs of Habsburg lands generally favored a federalistic arrangement, with autonomy for each of the national components. However Serbia, as a "winner" state after World War I, was able to impose centralist rule and Serbian hegemony over the new state. The 20's were thus characterized by political impasse between those favoring a unitary state (centralists) and those insisting on national autonomy (federalists). Slovene political leaders found themselves struggling with Belgrade as they had struggled with Vienna. The political chaos of the twenties spawned the proclamation of royal dictatorship on January 6, 1929. King Alexander nullified the 1921 constitution, changed the name of the country to Yugoslavia, and divided the land into nine administrative units, or banovinas. Slovene lands became Dravska banovina.

The 1930s, if anything, were worse than the preceding decade. The fascism of neighboring Italy and the imperialism of the German Reich (after 1933) would have a direct bearing on Yugoslavia's future.⁷

When World War II began in Yugoslavia, virtually all of continental Europe had already come under German or Italian domination. On April 6, 1941, Yugoslavia was invaded because it refused to adhere to the Axis Tripartite Pact. It was quickly dismembered. Slovene lands were overrun and partitioned by her neighbors, Italy, Hungary, and Germany. Its annexation of Austria

in spring 1938 had given the German Reich a common border with Slovenia. The occupying powers promptly began de-Slovenizing policies, which included arrests, torture, executions, and deportations to Europe's notorious concentration camps.

With the Axis invasion, the royal government, unprepared for the defense of the country, fled, leaving its subjects to fend for themselves. In Slovenia the resistance movement, Liberation Front of the Slovene Nation (LF), was organized on April 27, 1941. It was led by the League of Communists of Slovenia (LCS), which coordinated its efforts with the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY), although the fact of communist leadership was deliberately played down in order to allow the broadest possible participation in the resistance, it was renamed the resistance/revolution after the partisan/communist victory was secured.

The resistance in Slovenia, as in many parts of Europe, was complicated by civil war, fought amongst the Slovenes over conflicting political ideologies. The communist-led partisan resistance, or LF, came out the winner in the events of 1941-45. At home it had broad support from those who were eager to fight the German and Italian invaders, and among those who didn't want a Serbian dynasty to come back in Yugoslavia. The LF also received decisive support in arms from the Allies after 1943. The LF also subscribed to a postwar plan for a federal Yugoslav Republic in which Slovenia (United Slovenia) would constitute a separate unit. The communist leadership also stressed that the second Yugoslavia, unlike the first, would be a people's democracy.⁸

After World War II Slovenes found themselves in the new Yugoslavia-SFRJ (Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). SFRJ was a federal state of equal nationalities. Yugoslav communists faithfully copied the Soviet system but it was by far the most liberal in Eastern Europe. Even with its power concentrated in the hands of a single party and its elite, there was enough balance to keep national antagonisms hidden below the surface. In November 1945 the first postwar election took place. There was only one list of candidates, those of Tito's Liberation Front. In Slovenia it received more than 90 percent of the votes cast. A few middle-class

politicians tried to form opposition but they were persecuted, accused of spying for the Western Allies, put on trial, and sentenced to prison and even to death.

The political pressure grew in 1947-48 when the Yugoslav communist leadership didn't want to obey dictates from Moscow. Yugoslavia found itself isolated from both East and West after its conflict with Stalin. The newly formed state had to look for its own way to modernize, to open to the West, but remain communist. After the early 1950's the relaxation of political oppression was gradual and was accompanied by the introduction of workers' self-management in the factories and the decentralization of the Yugoslav state administrative system.⁹

Until the mid-1950s there was no important public analysis dealing with the relations among Yugoslav nations. Political leaders and communist ideologists thought the Yugoslav national question was solved for good by socialist revolution and federal organization of the state. The federal system with its political and constitutional mechanism should ensure to all nations equal position and the right to self-determination. Political pressure and the still fresh memory of tragic events during World War II really calmed down national passions and disagreements for a short while. But national problems arose in a different form. They were hidden behind the problems of economic policy for a time. Very early, from 1945 to 1950, there was much criticism of Yugoslav economic policy from the Slovene communist elite. Yugoslav economic policy demanded fast industrialization of the country, which meant active financial support of more developed parts of the country (Slovenia, Croatia) to the undeveloped regions. In reality that meant the flow of capital from the developed North to the undeveloped South. Such a policy was considered to be a "false solidarity" and created strong political tensions and disagreements in the more developed regions.

The problem was that Slovenes participated far too much regarding their size and population in the burden of financing the undeveloped parts of Yugoslavia was not distributed fairly enough. The reaction of communist leaders in Belgrade and Ljubljana was an energetic one. Boris Kidric, a Slovene and in 1946 minister for industrialization in Yugoslavia, stated that

such a "cash flow" from north to south should be understood as a future investment in the undeveloped regions. Slovenia, as the most developed republic in the former Yugoslavia, obviously had some kind of special responsibilities toward the rest of the country.¹⁰ Slovene communist leadership prevented any kind of open discussion on the subject.

In the 1950s the open public discussion about the relations among the republics and nations became possible again. Slovenes were not satisfied with obvious centralism and soon it became clear that national questions and antagonism among nations in socialist Yugoslavia still weren't satisfactory solved. In 1957, the leading Yugoslav communist ideologist Edvard Kardelj, a Slovene, published the second edition of his book *On the Development of the Slovene National Question*. In the foreword he stated that the main reason for the tensions among the nations (the remains of the bourgeois nationalism) in socialist Yugoslavia was the difference in development of the particular parts in Yugoslavia and in the centralist tendencies in the top Yugoslav leadership.¹¹ He wrote that the basis for the Yugoslav political, socioeconomical, and cultural integration should be the idea of socialism which would link all different nations and became the basis for new Yugoslav (patriotic) consciousness. Socialist Yugoslavia did recognize the equality of the nations but wanted to create something new, a Yugoslav identity.

In 1958 at the seventh congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, Kardelj's views split the membership into two parts, procentralist and federalist. Opposing opinions and discussions were held throughout the first half of the 60's. At that time Kardelj fell in disfavor with Tito and was pushed to the edge of politics for a short period of time.

The polemics between federal and Slovene politicians were the only polemics in Yugoslavia at the time. They were carried on in the circles of the writers and intellectuals. Dobrica Cosic, in 1992 the president of the third Yugoslavia, in his writings and speeches stated many times that borders among republics only render more difficult the exchange and cooperation among the Yugoslav nations. He proclaimed Yugoslavism to be an "international practice" and the

component part of "the historically unavoidable integration of the world and the inception of the socialist civilization on the planet."¹²

Dušan Pirjevec, Slovene literary historian, answered Cosic that "nationality is a constituent element of human personality, the basis of human existence, and the starting point for human communication with the world. Over time the process will emphasize ever more the category of the nation as the elemental form of association." This meant that no Yugoslavia is possible within an abstract or coercive uniformity. It is only possible in all of its multiplicity.¹³ After the dismissal of Aleksander Rankovic, chief of the secret police, who was an advocate of centralism, the national question became the pivotal topic in Slovenia. The years from 1968 to 1972 were, perhaps, those that promised the most, before the last chance for serious and effective reforms was missed. More modern and liberal-thinking communists made their way into leadership roles in most republics at the end of the 1960s. They wanted socialism to be reformed into a relatively democratic social order. The government of Slovene Prime Minister Stane Kavcic, which advocated this reform, directed all its efforts to the formulation of an economic program that did not renounce either socialism or the single party communist system, but did foresee gradual political democratization in all areas and set itself the goal of "a market economy with a social state." A precondition for success was to be the opening of Slovenia to the world, and its more independent position within Yugoslavia.¹⁴ The decision from the top of the communist ranks to suspend and alter reform policies in all republics was experienced as a Yugoslav catastrophe. After 1972 it was no longer possible to express freely one's political views, and the republic's communist leadership, true to Tito, tried to bring affairs back under federal control at any cost.

In 1974 Yugoslavia got its new constitution. With 405 clauses it was probably the world's largest constitution and, probably because of its absurd length, was virtually untranslatable and largely nonsensical. It was mainly Kardelj's creation and debates surrounding it continually revealed the inconsistent nature of the Tito-Kardelj national-political concepts. The 1974

constitution was an intricate series of checks and balances designed to prevent any individual from acquiring as much power as Tito himself had held and to prevent any of Yugoslavia's people from dominating the federation. At a time when he was already in his eighties and could not expect to live much longer, Tito had made himself more indispensable to Yugoslavia than he had ever been before. On the one hand the new constitution increased the autonomy of the people and republics, while on the other it strengthened the power and authority of the communist party which, despite its external decentralization, continued to function in a hierarchical and centralist manner. One should not forget that all important positions in the federal and republic governments were held by communists. The same situation was in the economy. The situation was an absurd one. Republics within the federation were given a higher level of independence but on the other hand all important positions were held by communists who were led from Belgrade.

The Slovene communist leadership pushed Kavcic aside in 1972. It supported the 1974 constitution in its entirety, which at once guaranteed a political monopoly that was to dominate Slovene politics until the second half of the 1980s.¹⁵

After Tito's death the crisis was not to be prevented. After 1980 the Yugoslav communist system showed itself to be utterly incapable of resolving the accumulated social, economic, political, and national antagonisms.

It was in Kosovo, Yugoslavia's poorest region, that Tito's state came unstuck. Kosovo at a time was an autonomous province within Serbia with the large non-Serb population living there. The policy towards Kosovo was the major reason that Serb nationalists came to reject Tito's vision of Yugoslavia. Serbs are abused by Kosovo. This emotional attachment to Kosovo, the so-called "cradle of the Serb nation", can be explained only as a part of a collective sense of disappointment among Serbs at what might have been had the medieval Serbian Empire not been destroyed by the Turkish assault on Europe.¹⁶

Kosovo was both the scene of decisive battle between Serbian and Turkish armies in 1389 and the place where the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate was founded in 1346. Today the oldest and

most celebrated Serbian Orthodox monasteries still stand across Kosovo. Kosovo Polje (Kosovo's field) is the plain on which Serbs fought Ottoman invaders, thereby standing for Christendom against the Muslim horde. According to Serbian mythology, it was only their battle on St. Vitus Day, 1389, that saved Europe. The Turkish onslaught was so much reduced that it lacked the momentum to take Vienna. As the Serbian center of gravity moved to the north, Kosovo became increasingly populated by Albanians who were Islamized by the Turks. Animosity toward Muslim Albanians throughout six centuries was intensified.

Albanians make up the majority of the population yet Serbs claim Kosovo to be theirs. Yugoslav rule in Kosovo between the world wars and right up until the 1960s was a brutal one. Relations between Serbs and Albanians in Yugoslavia were essentially colonial. Two cultures existed side by side in Kosovo, but the Yugoslav state apparatus was only concerned with the interest of the Serb population. In the mid 1960s Tito decided to emancipate Albanians. Rule has switched to majority. This change had radically altered relations between the province Albanians and the hitherto privileged Serbs. Tito tried to be impartial. He refused to turn Kosovo into a republic as Albanians desired. In spite of that Serbs were not satisfied. They did not accept the new order.¹⁷

Albanians began to rise in Yugoslav society. Primary schooling became universal and Albanian secondary schools opened throughout the province. Economically, the province was totally undeveloped. Growth in population outstripped any increase in GNP. Power in Kosovo was concentrated in the hands of a tiny oligarchy, which lacked the experience and expertise to manage an economy. In the period from 1971 to 1975, Kosovo received 685 million in aid from federal funds. It also received from Belgrade a further 240 million of assistance of World Bank credit to Yugoslavia between 1975 and 1987, almost one quarter of what the country received.¹⁸ Yet Kosovo's economic condition worsened. Money was poorly invested and largely fritted away on prestige projects or wasted on privileged lifestyles for the new elite. The province's economic predicament and demographic changes each in some way amplified the other.

Kosovo's Serbs were concerned by a sharp increase in the Albanian population. They were dissatisfied and some began to move out of the province. Between 1961 and 1981 the number of Serbs living in Kosovo declined from 227,016 or 18.4 percent of the total population to 209,498 or 13.2 percent. At the same time, the Albanian population jumped from 646,605 to 1,226,736.¹⁹ The prominent Croatian economist Branko Horvat maintains that the underlying cause of immigration was economic backwardness. The violence in 1981 might have influenced Serbs to leave Kosovo, but it could not be judged as a sufficient explanation. An official statement in October 1988 put the number of Serbs and Montenegrins to have left Kosovo since the riots at 25,661. Although Serbs and Montenegrins were a privileged class in the society they left Kosovo for political and economic reasons. In 1982, although over three-quarters of the Kosovo population, Albanians made up only 60 percent of the work force. The total for Serbs and Montenegrins, with only 15 percent of the total population, was 33 percent. It is obvious that the situation was ethnically disproportionate.²⁰

The 1981 crisis was a direct product of Tito's regime. James Gow states that there were four major elements of the crises:

1. Repression, the absence of political freedoms, and a consequent lack of information and public political debates.
2. Economic standing of Kosovo.
3. Expansion of the population of Kosovo.
4. Expansion of education for Albanians.²¹

On March 11, 1981, students at Priština University in Kosovo organized a demonstration against poor living conditions on campus. When the police used excessive force against the demonstrators, unrest spread throughout Kosovo, and the local communists appealed to Belgrade for help. On April 3, martial law was imposed. Police and JNA units were deployed to Kosovo to calm Albanians down. Long jail sentences were handed out to more than 1,600 Albanians, the majority of them university and high school students.

The federal authorities had for the first time taken sides in a dispute between two of Yugoslavia's peoples. The unrest in Kosovo was labelled a counterrevolution and Serbs with the backing of the League of Communist of Yugoslavia reestablished Serbian control over the province.²²

Ivan Stambolic became the president of Serbia in 1986. He was the prime minister the year Tito died and after that he was the head of League of Communists of Belgrade and of Serbia. For twenty years, wherever Stambolic went, Slobodan Milosevic followed. Ivan Stambolic was the key to Milosevic's early career. In 1984 he succeeded Stambolic as a head of the Belgrade League of Communists, and in 1986 he moved into Stambolic's old job as a head of the League of Communists of Serbia.

The 1974 constitution was neither fish nor fowl with regard to Serbia. Within the Republic of Serbia, two autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, were established. The dual intention was to limit Serbian dominion and to recognize the rights of the majority ethnic Albanian and Hungarian population in those provinces. The autonomous provinces were established within Serbia and a large ethnic Hungarian population in Vojvodina and a dominant Albanian community in Kosovo were recognized and given limited non-sovereign rights to self-determination. For example the police, the militia, defense, and judicial system were under the authority of both autonomous provinces. Neither Serbs nor Albanians were satisfied. Albanians, because of the ethnic homogeneity of Kosovo, wanted to have their own republic but the tremendous psychologic importance of Kosovo to Serbs made this impossible. On the other hand, Serbs did not like the changes that altered their colonial status in the province. Their complaints became the foundation of a swell of nationalism.²³

Stambolic's intent was to reintegrate both provinces back into Serbia. He attempted to harness Serb nationalism to his cause and since Tito was dead there was nobody to stop him. He used the Serbian media to articulate his program. Commentaries about recentralization of Yugoslav society became a feature of the Serbian press. Stambolic hoped to use these opinions,

although he did not agree with extreme nationalists, to put pressure on the rest of the federation. Articles written by nationalists began to appear in Serbian newspapers in 1981. Many comments were disguised attempts to criminalize Yugoslavia's Albanian population in Serb minds and to justify Serbs attempts to reintegrate Kosovo. They could be considered an incitement to racial hatred and probably could not be published in democratic societies, and if Tito had been alive, they could not have been published as well. The result was that by the mid 1980s nationalists in Serbia gained back undeserved popularity.²⁴

In the meantime in 1985, a now notorious memorandum was drafted by a working group of the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. The Serb case against Tito's Yugoslavia was set out. The importance of the memorandum was that it was prepared by a highly respected body, and supported by the most celebrated intellectuals in Serbia. The memorandum outlined the anomalous position of Serbia in the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and called into question of the 1974 constitution, dubbing it anti-Serb. The memorandum stated that Tito's communists had systematically discredited Serbs. Discrimination started in the 1930s, based on the mistaken conviction that Serbs had oppressed other nations in the first Yugoslavia. Communists were accused of having preserved a policy of a "strong Yugoslavia; weak Serbia." They accused Croats (Josip Broz Tito) and Slovenes (Edvard Kardelj) of deliberately constructing federal Yugoslavia in such a way as to exploit Serbia economically. Moreover, Serbs were divided among several federal units, weakened, and above all, two autonomous provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo were carved out of Serbia by the 1974 Constitution. The memorandum alleged that Serbs in Kosovo were victims of genocide by Albanians. As a result, a group of ethnic Serbs from Kosovo told the Federal Assembly that if it could find no solution, they would solve the problems themselves.²⁵ Most of the memorandum's allegations were pure absurdity and they would probably remained those of the tiny faction of frustrated, though celebrated intellectuals, doing nobody any harm. But in the hands of an unscrupulous politician they posed a serious threat to the Yugoslav federation.

Ideas in the memorandum were simplistic, black and white, and hence easy to catch for an average person. On the other hand, the standard of living was declining and people were unsatisfied with conditions in the country. Time was just ripe enough for a scapegoat to appear.

The memorandum was denounced in public by Serbian president Ivan Stambolic. Such extreme nationalism was too much for him and he wanted to stop a tide. But it was too late. Things had already gotten out of hands. Although the Central Committee of the Serbian League of Communists condemned the document, this fact was suppressed at the insistence of its president, Slobodan Milosevic.²⁶ Serbs finally got a new hero, a leader who would finally give them back their pride. Serbian nationalist fervor supported the rise of Milosevic to the leadership of the Serbian League of Communists. His nationalist policies saw changes in the Serbian, Vojvodina, and Kosovan constitutions, taking away the force of the two provinces' autonomy.

The opinion of Christopher Bennet, author of the "Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse," is that Milosevic was not a nationalist but was ruthlessly ambitious and prepared to do anything to fuel that ambition. His driving force was an overwhelming lust for power, so he was exactly the politician unscrupulous enough to use the situation in the country for gaining popularity and, with that, power. As president of the Serbian League of Communists he was the most powerful politician in Serbia, since it was now he who made new appointments in the League of Communists. He moved his followers, whose only qualification was loyalty, into key points in Serbian society. Slowly he gained control over Serbia and was strong enough to move against his mentor, who boundlessly trusted him. His mentor even helped him on the way, by sending him as his personal envoy to Kosovo in April 1987, where conflicts were escalating again. The rising of Milosevic was done in the best Stalinistic manner.²⁷

Relations between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo were tense, while the standard of living was declining. Albanians' aspirations were toward Kosovo as a republic but Serbs, whose population continued to decline, were determined to reverse Kosovo's quasi-republican status. Stambolic aimed to avert a return to repression by supporting more moderate Albanian leadership

under Azem Vllasi who he helped come to power in 1986. Albanian leaders were willing to give up some of Kosovo's autonomy on behalf of the Serbs, but Stambolic's plans were scuppered by Serb nationalists who continuously upped their demands. On April 27, Stambolic sent to Kosovo his personal envoy to calm down the Serb nationalists. It was in the village of Kosovo Polje, scene of the infamous battle and headquarters of the Kosovo Polje Committee of Serbs and Montenegrins, where Milosevic gave his televised speech. But instead of calming the nationalists down, Milosevic endorsed the allegations of genocide against the Serb nation and promised them that nobody would ever beat them again. Instantly the whole Serb nationalist movement stepped on his side and began to support him.²⁸ Milosevic became the first politician to drop the communist jargon and with it all commitment to national equality. His message became clear. Serbs have to fight for their rights and he, as head of Serbia's League of Communists, could best prosecute that struggle on behalf of Serbs.

After events in Kosovo Polje the open struggle between two wings of the Serbian League of Communists started. The principal protagonists were Slobodan Milosevic on behalf of a Greater Serbia and Dragisa Pavlovic, the leader of those who clung to the concept of a multinational state and hence the chief defender of the Stambolic wing of the League of Communists. Milosevic had prepared his offensive well. Since he was the president of the Serbian communists, he was the one who had made all the important appointments in Serbia. He purged Serbian life thoroughly and had already placed his supporters in key posts. During 1987 Milosevic and Pavlovic fought within the media that each man controlled. The Serbian media and journalists bear a huge responsibility for the resurgence of national hatred in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, as well the nature of the fighting when the country finally disintegrated in war. The media in former Yugoslavia had enormous impact on public opinion. At the same time, Milosevic increased the pressure with mass protest rallies, which were carefully stage-managed. The demonstrations began with small groups from Kosovo, but expanded to crowds numbering from 10,000 to as many as 1 million.²⁹ Milosevic told them again and again how they had been exploited in Tito's Yugoslavia,

how they were facing genocide, and how they had to fight for their rights. Those who attended the meetings had the day off work (paid by their employers), and were given free food. On September 23, during the eighth plenum of the Serbian League of Communists, Pavlovic was expelled. Milosevic had prepared the ground well and had already won the backing of senior communists before launching his final offensive. Three months after the plenum, a powerless Stambolic resigned as president of Serbia.

Milosevic continued with a purge of the League of Communists and media. The campaign served to purge all who were prepared to think for themselves. He gained control over Radio and Television Belgrade and over all important newspapers in Serbia. All necessary means for manipulating the public were now in his hands. The campaign against everything which was not Serb went into overdrive in the media and at Milosevic's notorious rallies. Half-truths and brazen lies were packed each night into television news and daily newspapers. The campaign was so all-encompassing that people lost touch with reality and were prepared to believe almost anything they were told. What had or had not actually taken place ceased to matter. The obsession among Serbs with twisted interpretations of the past, dates in the late 1980s. The Serb national psyche is not the product of centuries of historical evolution but was deliberately manufactured by the Serbian media since 1987. Media have been telling the Serbs day after day for years how exploited they were in Yugoslavia and how threatened they were by genocide on all fronts. Ordinary Serbs came to believe that all sorts of crimes were continuously being prepared against them.

In commandeering the historical language of Serb nationalism from the anti-communists, Milosevic found a language to overcome the problem of opposing a state that nationalists in other republics propagandized as Serbian. This language was the Serbian national myth of victimization. He capitalized on the widespread belief in the 1980s that Serbs and Montenegrins were being forced once again to flee their historical cradle. He propagated that Serbia had been mistreated in Tito's Yugoslavia, that the federal state was constructed to divide and weaken Serbia and to

prevent the Serb nation from having its own state. By these tactics and by using the idea of protection he was able to link nationalist intellectuals, ordinary people hurting from the effects of economic reform, and all those who had felt like outsiders in the socialist system. He was able to do this and still use the organizational network of the communist party and the police.³⁰

The same tactics used in Kosovo were extended throughout Serbia and into Serb communities across Yugoslavia. Agitators ensured that vast numbers of Serbs attended Milosevic's meetings. There was nothing spontaneous about the meetings, which were all carefully stage-managed.

In the 1988 rallies spread to Vojvodina and Montenegro. Steadily Milosevic increased the pressure on the leadership of both places. Tens and even hundreds of thousands of demonstrators regularly surrounded the parliaments demanding the resignation of governments. By October 1988, when the League of Communists of Yugoslavia plenum was approving some reductions in the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, governments of the two provinces resigned in the face of recurring populist demonstrations and were replaced by governments comprised of Milosevic allies. The government of Montenegro resigned in January 1989. Members of new governments were Milosevic supporters and they carried out his policy: thorough a purge of society, the party and the media.

Federal authorities were helpless. At the height of the assault on Vojvodina, the federal president, Raif Dizdarevic, wanted to impose a state of emergency and protect the Vojvodina government but more than 350,000 people rallied in Belgrade to denounce the interference of the federal government. Slobodan Milosevic had the masses well in his hand and whenever the federal government did not act as he planned, mass demonstrations were organized in Belgrade.

In November the two Albanians representing Kosovo province on the federal party presidency were removed from their posts by the provincial party committee. This and the recent dismissal of their government provoked widespread demonstrations among the province's Albanians. In February 1989 a general strike and an underground strike by 1,300 miners from the

Trepca lead and zinc mines started. As a result, Kosovo's new pro-Milosevic leadership resigned on February 28. Huge rallies attended by close to one million people were organized in Belgrade. Federal authorities again acted as Milosevic had planned. The resignations were withdrawn. Vllasi was arrested under the charges of counterrevolution, a partial state of emergency was imposed and the military moved in. On March 23 Kosovo's assembly was ringed by tanks and with MiGs flying over the capital, was coerced into accepting a new constitution returning authority to Serbia. On March 28, the Serbian parliament formally proclaimed the constitutional changes which finally destroyed Tito's concept of Yugoslavia. Meanwhile unrest spread throughout the province. According to official figures 24 people were killed although eyewitness accounts spoke of a much higher number.³¹

Milosevic by this time controlled four of Yugoslavia's eight federal units and now he was able to ignore federal opposition. His political use of crowds in 1988-89 was perceived by others as an aggression against the rest of Yugoslavia.

The only credible opposition to Milosevic's rise came from Slovenia. In contrast with the extreme nationalism in Serbia, Slovene nationalism was free of historical hang-ups and focused on the future. Slovenes, as a few people, were afraid that their separate cultural and linguistic identity was threatened by Yugoslavia's Serbo-Croatian majority. Slovenia's communist leadership was well aware of the cultural fears of a significant section of Slovene society. At the federal level they worked to retain as much autonomy as possible, while at home they attempted to promote a sense of Slovene national pride. The Slovene communists used media to articulate their own vision of Yugoslavia's future. They wanted to court popularity at home but in the long run the growth of opposition to the communist state was a significant factor in the evolution of Slovene nationalism. Traditionally Slovenia was the most liberal republic in the former Yugoslavia and its communist leadership allowed a broader spectrum of views with many more dissenting voices than in any other part of Yugoslavia. But in the 1980s, a new generation of dissenters began to module a political opposition around specific issues and via alternative art forms. As the communist regime

lost credibility this new opposition gained confidence and its program became increasingly political.

The communist youth movement had served as a sort of safety valve within Yugoslav society. It was a forum for the discussion of new and often unorthodox ideas and thus enabled the communist leadership to hold those ideas under control. By the 1980s Slovenia's Youth Organization had clearly exceeded its mandate and had become a focal point for opposition to communist rule. Its weekly magazine *Mladina* was a permanent thorn in the side of the political establishment and especially the military.³² Over a number of years, *Mladina* had issued various challenges to the JNA. For much of the time, debate focused on the initiative of the Slovene Youth Organization to permit conscientious objections and the performance of military service in a civilian capacity. The concept was anathema to the JNA. In 1988 the civil-military relations in Slovenia deteriorated not only because of a chasm between large sections of Slovene society but because in the course of events, Slovene political leadership was antagonized and brought into greater harmony with Slovene youth. The catalyst in this process was the trial, in July 1988, of three journalists and a noncommissioned officer (NCO) for contravening military secrecy. The Army's decision to prosecute and the way in which it was done must be judged as bad politics, bad public relations, and bad for defense. On May 31, Janez Jansa was arrested on suspicion of betraying a military secret. He was a writer for *Mladina* on military matters and his articles had become increasingly critical. At the time of his arrest, Jansa was a candidate for the presidency of the Slovene Youth Organization. Subsequently another journalist, David Tasic, and an NCO in the JNA, Ivan Borstner, were also arrested. Shortly before the trial Franci Zavrl, the managing editor of *Mladina*, was indicted again. These arrests caused considerable concern among Slovenes. A large protest rally in support of the accused was organized for June 21. It was called a cultural meeting, and it was dignified, and peaceful but Belgrade TV described it as counter-revolutionary and escalating nationalism. The result was a remarkable homogenization of Slovene society and national mobilization behind the accused. It was widely rumored that the document in

question was a plan for a military takeover of Slovenia. This was officially denied. In the eyes of the Slovene population, the trial was an attack on Slovenes and Slovenia. The breakwater was the trial itself. It was heard in camera and in Serbo-Croat. These aspects of the trial were provocative to the Slovene public and fueled the idea that the whole action was anti-Slovene. Language is a principal focus of cultural identity. The Slovenes, proud of their language and cultural identity, were shocked by this decision. The issue is an important one. Article 212 of the Slovene constitution states that all official business in the territory of the Republic of Slovenia should be conducted in Slovene. This was consistent with the federal constitution. The accused four protested against the Serbo-Croat language in which the trial was supposed to be held. The military court rejected the protest. The Slovene presidency took up this protest. It requested the SFRY presidency, responsible for military courts, to rule on the matter. The federal presidency ruled that the court was in order. The opinion was that the federal presidency left military matters to the military. It is hard to understand how a particular legal code could supersede the federal and Slovene constitutions which were, theoretically, the ultimate legal documents and should supersede all other legal matters. To the Slovenes and to the independent observer, it seemed that the trials were unconstitutional. This was ironic because the JNA's constitutional duty was to defend and uphold the constitution. Obviously the JNA took sides again and lost another part of its legitimacy.

When all four were found guilty and sentenced to terms of between five months and four years, a big "cultural meeting" was organized in Ljubljana and attended by more than 50,000 people. The meeting was restrained and peaceful. It contrasted strongly with contemporaneous protests in Serbia in which noisy crowds marched through the streets chanting and besieging local assemblies and the federal parliament.

The language issue homogenized Slovene politics more than anything else. The result was even a greater alignment of the youth and leadership. Milan Kucan (president of the LCS at the time), asked how any territory in which Slovene was not used in all official areas could be

regarded as sovereign. The language issue also raised an old question concerning the use of languages in the JNA. According to the federal constitution the equality of languages in the army "shall be ensured", but the reality was that Serbo-Croat was the command language, used almost in all circumstances, reflecting the preponderance of Serbs and Montenegrins among junior officers. In the eyes of the leadership and the population, the trial was an attack on Slovenes and Slovenia. It reinforced the image of the JNA as a Serb institution and, more important, JNA lost its legitimacy in eyes of the Slovene public. JNA was seen as the institution of the southern republics, particularly Serbs, who were seen as a drain on Slovene prosperity, and also showed an intent on gaining centralized control over Slovene affairs and tried to deprive Slovenes of their constitutional rights. The events in the summer of 1988 emboldened Slovene politicians in their advocacy of more liberal politics, of "socialism on a human scale," of pluralism. In particular the initiation of the Committee for Human Rights was significant. It paved the way for the formation of the Social Democratic Alliance (DEMOS) toward the end of 1988, which later defeated the communists in the first democratic elections. This opposition to the communists continued to push for the existence of a multiparty system. In the second half of 1989, the Slovene leadership chose to expand its interpretation of pluralism and to favor a multiparty system.³³

Meanwhile, the Serbian-imposed changes to the largely Albanian populated Kosovo's autonomy led to a popular protest and, subsequently, to the declaring of a state of emergency, intervention by the JNA, and the purge of the provincial leadership. To ordinary Slovenes, the Kosovan events showed what might have happened. The parallels were so great that it was time to take a stand. On February 27, 1989, Slovenia's opposition organized a rally at Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana's cultural center, to demonstrate solidarity with Kosovo's Albanians and, in the face of intense public pressure, the republic's communist leadership decided to join the protest. Leading communists, including President Milan Kucan, shared the platform with the non-communist opposition. One effect of this was the signing of a petition against the position of a state of

emergency in Kosovo by 450,000 people in Slovenia within a day. For the first time Slovenia's communists openly defied the federal League of Communists of Yugoslavia.

Criticism of Serbian actions did not come from the country alone. The abuses of human rights in Kosovo were internationally condemned. International critics included Helsinki Watch, Amnesty International, the European Parliament, and the US House of Representatives, all of which sent delegations to Kosovo.

At the same time, like communists throughout Eastern Europe, the Slovene communists were unpopular despite attempts to democratize society. By taking a firm stand, communists calculated that they would be able to rejuvenate the Slovene League of Communists and boost their popularity at home. The Serb media reacted predictably. The hate campaign was switched from Albanians to Slovenes. Within days everybody in Serbia knew how Slovenia had systematically exploited Serbia ever since the creation of Yugoslavia. At the same time, Milosevic attempted to pressure the republic into submission via an economic boycott (the markets of Serbia, Kosovo, and Vojvodina were shut to Slovene companies) and further nationalist rallies, this time in Ljubljana. Slovenia then countered by refusing to pay its assessed share of the federal fund for the undeveloped regions and sent the monies earmarked for Kosovo directly to its provincial government, in defiance of the constitutional change in Kosovo. Faced with the prospect of several hundred thousand Serbs descending on the Slovene capital, Slovene leadership banned the meeting. Slovene police reserve forces were mobilized and threatened to close Slovenia's southern border to incoming ralliers.

The recentralization of Serbia's League of Communists and their assault on federal Yugoslavia was preventing the country from following Eastern Europe in abandoning communism. As the result, by the middle of 1989 most Slovenes had come to the conclusion that Yugoslavia had precious little left to offer them, whereas they had a lot to lose by remaining part of the country. The leadership decided that it could not stem the tide of democracy and opted for a multiparty system. Leaders began to espouse a confederate arrangement in which each republic

could choose its own form of government. Republics which desired to remain communist could do so, while others would be free to abandon communism. On September 27, 1989, Slovenia's parliament passed fifty-four amendments to its constitution formally renouncing the League of Communists' monopoly of political power and including the explicit right to self-determination, meaning a secession from Yugoslavia. At the time it was not a statement of intent and whether Slovenia exercised this right or not would depend on developments elsewhere in the country, especially in Serbia.³⁴ The most controversial amendments can be seen to stem directly from the circumstances of the trial and Serb efforts to recentralize. Prime among them was an unequivocal statement of the condition of Slovenia's membership of the federation, on a voluntary basis with the right to self-determination and, therefore, secession. Although this was clear in Yugoslavia's original post-war constitution, it was not spelled out in the 1974 version, which spoke only of the republic's sovereignty. Slovenes pointed out that they had entered the union on their own accord and, if abused, could walk out of it in the same way. Other amendments stemmed from a delineation of economic sovereignty; that federal organs active in the republic should respect the equal rights status of the languages of the Yugoslav nations and nationalities; the proposal for dealing with federal breaches of the Slovene Constitution; and a provision that the declaration of a state of emergency and the deployment of military forces on the republic's territory could be decided only by Slovene authorities.³⁵

The amendments to the republican constitution show the pluralist, liberal direction in which the Slovenes believed they and other Yugoslavs should travel together. They were in contrast with Milosevic's tendency, which advocated a stronger role for the party in a more centralized Yugoslavia. The amendments were a statement of the future Slovenia wished to share with other Yugoslavs, not a declaration of intent to secede.

By the end of January 1990, the Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists (14th), which the JNA had been urging since 1986, convened. It was billed as a clash of alternative conceptions of Yugoslavia's future development. Milosevic wanted to impose his

centralist model, whereas Kucan hoped to expand local autonomy within Yugoslavia. Kucan was shouted down by Milosevic's supporters and was unable even to present his proposals adequately. Milosevic's bloc had attempted to use its numerical superiority to impose a blueprint for Yugoslavia on the rest of the country, irrespective of non-Serb opinion. As it became clear there could be no negotiations, the Slovene delegation walked out of the congress on January 20, never to return. The Croatian party leader, Ivica Racan, took the position that his delegation should abstain until the Slovenes returned. The congress split in two. One bloc combined Serbia, its two provinces, and Montenegro, and was lead by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who insisted that the congress continue without the Slovenes and recalculate voting procedures accordingly. The other bloc was formed by the newly assertive Croatian party with the two other republics (Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia) and the army. When the Slovenes did not return, these four voted for adjournment. This sealed the fate of the party. An emergency congress of the League of Communists of Slovenia took place on February 4, 1990. The League of Communists of Slovenia abolished itself and with this act, de facto, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia ceased to exist and Yugoslavia became a multi-party system. The Slovene decision gave a further push toward liberal democracy. The federal party could no longer function as the most important institution in Yugoslavia.

From the ashes of the League of Communists of Slovenia rose the Party of Democratic Renewal. The Slovene leadership wanted to give Yugoslavia a chance to become "West European", an ambition that was reflected in the election slogan: "Europe Now"! Both Slovenia and Yugoslavia were now multi-party systems. For so long, Yugoslavia and especially Slovenia had been in the forefront of reforming the communist state. Suddenly, Yugoslavia was lagging behind. Communism's collapse in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania made it possible for the reformist Slovene leadership openly to declare multi-party elections and emphasize Slovenia's right to self-determination. Slovene communist leadership, unlike the majority of communists elsewhere in Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, was continuing a policy that had been

adopted long before.³⁶ The political stalemate suited Milosevic, whose offensive had always been two-pronged. On the one hand, if they served his purposes he used the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and federal institutions. On the other hand he was able to maximize pressure on his opponents through unofficial means such as the use of rabble nationalism. When his attempt to recentralize Yugoslavia through the League of Communists failed in January 1990, he merely renewed efforts to destabilize the four federal units outside his control by inflaming the Serb communities there. The same tactics used in Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro were extended to Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Fresh rallies were organized and Serbian media was again beaming its propaganda to the Serb population, but this time in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The demise of the Slovene party enhanced the role of the state. Political dialogue with Slovenes on executive matters would have to take place in some other primary institutional structure. At the federal level it was Prime Minister Ante Markovic. All disputes now had to be dealt with by state institutions, not the party, which was no longer all-Yugoslav. During 1990 three blueprints for Yugoslavia's future were on the table: Slovenia and Croatia proposed that Yugoslavia become a loose confederation; Serbia insisted on a recentralised federation; and the Federal Prime Minister, Ante Markovic, hoped that by getting the economy moving again he might be able to maintain a Yugoslav entity. Markovic was ethnically a Croat but temperamentally he was a committed Yugoslav. When the LCY broke up at the beginning of 1990, the federal state apparatus replaced the party structure as the glue which held the federation together and Markovic emerged by default as the country's leading federal politician. He convinced himself that as long as he managed to have a successful economic policy he would also be able to halt the slide toward civil war. Inflation at the time was 2,000 percent. To fight it, Markovic had devaluated the dinar, made it convertible, and pegged to the German mark. To reduce demand, he froze wages for six months and liberated prices. Results were astonishing. By the end of February inflation dipped beneath 10 percent and the country's foreign currency reserves jumped to 7.1 billion, twice the level of May 1989. It was a very encouraging beginning but without any realistic backup in the

economy, as would be seen at the end of the year. Further more, Markovic's early economic achievements were not accompanied by any progress on the political front. The Serbian boycott of Slovene goods remained in place and there was no relaxation of police oppression in Kosovo.

Markovic founded his own all-Yugoslav political party, with which he hoped to contest as yet unscheduled federal elections. He hoped that he might just be able to give the federal government a democratic mandate and legitimacy within the republics, all still governed by communists, lacked. Markovic needed to hold federal elections before any of the republics went to the polls. But Slovenia's communist leadership had already committed to multiparty elections in April 1990 and was not prepared to delay a poll. Any move increasing the authority of Yugoslavia's federal center was for Slovenes a potential threat. Centralization, whether by Markovic or by Milosevic, had become synonymous with Serb domination and was therefore unacceptable.

As scheduled, elections in Slovenia were held on April 8. Two weeks later Croatia followed. In Slovenia communists were defeated in the parliamentary elections by DEMOS (the Democratic Opposition of Slovenia), a fragile opposition of five opposition parties. However, in the presidential elections Milan Kucan managed to hang on to power. In Croatia, center-right parties decisively ousted the communists. The leader of the right wing Croat Democratic Community, Franjo Tudjman (a former partisan and general), was elected. Macedonia (November 11) produced a mixed result. An alliance of nationalist parties held 37 seats, reform communists 30, a coalition of two pro-Albanian parties 25, and a grouping of young democrats and socialists 18. However, the most prominent Macedonian politician remained its representative at the federal presidency, Vasil Tupurkovski. Meanwhile in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where voters went to the polls a week later, the communists lost. The Muslim Party for Democratic Action gained 41 seats in the Chamber of Citizens, followed by 34 for the Serbian Democratic Party and 20 for the Croatian Democratic Community (the Bosnian cousins of nationalist parties in Serbia and Croatia). Lastly, the reform communists won 13 seats. The distribution of seats was proportional to the ethnic

composition of the republic. Alija Izetbegovic, the PDA member, became the president. In the remaining republics, Serbia and Montenegro, there were overwhelming votes for the pre-democratic forces. In Montenegro, Momir Bulatovic secured only 40 percent of the first round votes and had to wait for a second ballot for the republican presidency. Meanwhile, his unchanged League of Communists of Montenegro took 85 of the 125 places available in parliament on the first vote.

Elsewhere in the country the communists organized fair elections in which they were defeated, but in Serbia Milosevic made sure he did not make the same mistake. Elections were held in December 1990 but before that, because of the media being in the hands of Milosevic, he effectively shut out all opposition. At the same time Milosevic successfully bribed the voters in the form of massive wage and pension increases on the eve of elections. Milosevic effectively stole 1.7 billion from the rest of the country. Serbia's central bank printed whatever money Milosevic felt he needed to get himself reelected and the size of the loan was seen several weeks later when inflation took off again throughout the country. Serbia's elections thus marked the end of Markovic's economic program. He eventually resigned in December 1991 rather than endorse a war budget.³⁷

Markovic's reform program had been dependent on republican cooperation. But intra-republican squabbles undermined his achievements and hampered progress. At the center of Yugoslavia's surviving its critical condition was the competition between federal and republican institutions and among different republican authorities. In practice, all republics cheated the program at times, while there was never any attempt to implement it in Serbia. Milosevic's interest was not to see Markovic succeed. From the start he worked to sabotage the program.

In Slovenia, Markovic's reforms were most thoroughly implemented. The result was unemployment for the first time. In Serbia, by contrast, Milosevic ignored the wage freeze and within months the average income in Serbia equalled that of Slovenia though there was no increase in productivity. In October 1990 Serbia began to levy duties on Slovene and Croatian

imports and to nationalize the property of Slovene and Croatian companies. Everything was justified by the years of economic exploitation Serbia had allegedly endured. The final blow to Markovic's reforms, as mentioned, was done by Serbia's penetration in Yugoslavia's monetary system.

In the course of 1990, as mentioned before, there were three proposed models of Yugoslavia's future: confederative model (Kucan and Tudjman), centralist model (Milosevic and Jovic) and Markovic's model. One of these was proposed by the president of the Federal Presidency, Borisav Jovic, a Milosevic ally. His proposal for a new federation appeared to have support from Serbia and the JNA. Many items in his proposal indicated the intention of strengthening the federation. For example, items like the need for all republics to consent to changes in the borders of Yugoslavia and the obligatory nature of federal documents and laws throughout the federation seemed designed to maximize central control. This proposal was unacceptable to Slovenes and Croats. They said they would only stay as part of a confederated Yugoslavia and if that could not be achieved, then they would become independent. A proposal promoting even greater central control appeared to the Slovenes to be a move designed to precipitate the country's disintegration. On the other hand, Serbs and Montenegrins favored the proposal; Bosnia preferred it, but would also accept a confederation of all the existing republics; Macedonia began by supporting the federal option but by November, when elections took place in that republic, virtually all parties favored confederation.³⁸

Kucan and Tudjman jointly presented a confederative model. Slovenes would only continue to be a part of Yugoslavia on the basis of the principles inherent in that model. Kucan and Tudjman produced a discussion document, based primarily on European Community arrangements, which presented options for degrees of confederation. According to the proposal, a confederated Yugoslavia would be based on international principles, laws recognizing human and property rights, market economies, and parliamentary democracy. The important item was the right to secede from the confederation and possibility of being expelled from it if confederal

courts consistently found a member violating its obligations. Common points of the confederation would be a single market and monetary union, harmonized infrastructural elements, separate but coordinated armed forces, and certain matters regarding foreign policy where joint diplomatic action would be possible. Its chief institutions would be a Council of Ministers, Executive Commission, a consultative Parliament and Confederal Court (all along EC lines).³⁹

In other parts of Yugoslavia the response was the expected one. The federal president, JNA, Serbia, and Montenegro were against it, and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia were somewhere in-between. For the anti-confederal pessimists the confederal model was simply a way of breaking up Yugoslavia. For Milan Kucan, the proposed model offered an opportunity for coexistence and further integration. He also declared pessimistically that Serbian authorities were trying to compel Slovenia to secede as soon as possible.

The authors of the confederalist proposal (as shown in the 37 alternatives suggested in the document) were looking for a compromise, an arrangement that would recognize their interests and at the same time avoid the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Slovenia was going to become an independent sovereign state. The question for Slovenes was if this new status would be established within or without a federal state. Slovenes preferred to stay in Yugoslavia, but only in confederal one. The federation was not an option.⁴⁰

In reality, the ultimate goal for Yugoslavia's non-Serbian leaders was security from Serbia. The Jovic-Milosevic model of the centralist federation was not about coexistence but about stamping their own communist order on the entire country. By contrast, the pivotal point of the Kucan-Tudjman proposals was the concept of "civil society". That is, a society governed by the rule of law which is opposed to the arbitrary nature of communist authority. In civil society every citizen irrespective of national origins has equal rights and duties. The Kucan-Tudjman proposals were designed as an insurance policy against the Serbian tendencies to govern all of Yugoslavia's republics. The principal motivation for their proposals was fear of a Kosovo scenario taking place either in Slovenia or Croatia or both. The threat was very real. The JNA organized

maneuvers designed to deter Yugoslavia's northern republics from secession. They had exactly the opposite effect. For Slovene and Croatian politicians this was only confirmation that the military had come exclusively to represent the interests of Serbia. It tolerated the situation in Kosovo in which 90 percent of the population was systematically deprived of basic human rights, while in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina the JNA was supplying rebel Serbs with arms at the same time as it was trying to disarm the legally constituted territorial defense forces of Slovenia and Croatia.⁴¹

A very real oppression was going on in parts of the country and there was a perception of oppression everywhere else. The nation that claimed to be the most persecuted, Serbs, was ironically viewed as the oppressor. As a result of Milosevic's propaganda offensive, Serbs sincerely believed and behaved as if they were facing extermination. The Serbian media found their most convincing ammunition in Croatia, thanks to "Tudjman's elephantly behavior in the porcelain shop". The Croatian president proved to be his own worst enemy. Tudjman appeared to give substance to at least some of the Serbian media's allegations. Some of his earliest moves were really tactless and were directly used against him by the media. Prime examples were revoking of some of the finest Titoist legislation protecting the rights of minorities. The thirty-ninth amendment to the constitution, which made a two-thirds parliamentary majority mandatory for any change to laws concerning minorities, was scrapped. The HDZ party flag (Tudjman's party), which had been based on Croatian traditional designs, became the official flag of Croatia. The flag was very similar to the flag Ustasas used in the fascist Croat state during World War II and Croatia's Serbs rejected it on principle. Meanwhile the government set out to "purify" the Croatian language to remove alleged Serbisms, changing the street names and purging the administration in a manner which struck disproportionately against Croatia's Serbs. Language purification had predictably comic results as words which had died out almost half of century earlier were renewed and others were invented to differentiate between Croat and Serb. If we add to this the fascist nature of the Croat puppet state during World War II and the genocide of the Serbian population in the concentration camp Jasenovac, one can understand the uneasiness felt by the fifth of

Croatia's population who were not Croats. Tudjman could not resist explaining on every possible occasion that the Ustasas were not truly representative of Croats and that more Croats fought as partisans than Ustasas during World War II. All this played into Milosevic's hands and Tudjman, with his tactlessness, gave a substance to at least some of Serbia's media allegations.

The JNA made it clear that it would not recognize the result of Croatia's elections and the republic was defenseless. The situation in Croatia was also a cause of anxiety to Slovenia's leaders. What concerned Slovenia's leaders about Croatia and the rest of the country was the easiness with which the country was sliding towards civil war and how powerless they were to do anything about it. In the course of 1990 the situation in Kosovo as well as the country's border picture continued to deteriorate so that by the end of 1990, when Markovic's economic program came to its end, Slovenes could not see any future within Yugoslavia such as it was.⁴²

A question remained over Slovenia's ability to become independent. Slovenia was unique among Yugoslavia's republics in that it was in a position to extricate itself from the rest of the country with relative ease. Two things were to its advantage: the degree of ethnic homogeneity in the population and the relatively developed and autonomous economy. Slovenia was oriented toward Europe and only around one percent of raw materials came from the rest of the country. The Slovenian economy was prosperous in Yugoslav markets and a more or less autarkyan one. The official federal statistics on international trade shows that in the last 30 years, the Slovene economy had largely operated apart from the rest of Yugoslavia. The large share of Yugoslav export earnings emerging from Slovenia were not dependent on the Yugoslav market for cheap raw materials with which Slovenia's industry manufactured goods sold abroad. Only 1.6 percent of Slovenia's raw materials were imported from other parts of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav market accounted for only 14.8 percent of total purchases and 21.2 percent of sales from Slovenian industry. The Slovenian economy was more or less (80-85 percent) independent of the Yugoslav market.⁴³

It was clear that economically Slovenia could go on its own although the secession would add further economic hardships to those produced by economic reform, such as closure and unemployment. Moreover, since October 1990, when Serbia imposed taxes on Slovene exports to Serbia and began the nationalization of Slovene property in Serbia, the proportion of trade with the rest of the country had been declining. The Serbian trade boycott of Slovene goods, for example, was reported to have adversely affected one percent of the Slovene GNP and Serbia proper was the destination of less than 6 percent of the Slovene manufactured goods. Its province of Vojvodina accounted for another 2 percent. A much more difficult problem was Yugoslavia's debt. Who was responsible for what share of the 16 billion owed?⁴⁴ The Slovenian central bank was still negotiating with the rest of the former Yugoslavia and creditors about the distribution of the debt among the debtors as this paper was written.

What was realistic for Slovenia was impracticable for others who could become independent only with the peaceful agreement concomitant with confederation. Most parts were too poor to seriously consider moves to independence and too tied to the other parts of Yugoslavia for their economic well-being. Furthermore and probably most important, other republics were not ethnically homogenous and, critically, they had indigenous Serb minorities. The ethnic interpretation of Yugoslavia's nationalities meant that blurred boundaries and large minorities could be found everywhere. Apart from Slovenia only Kosovo had more than 90 percent of its population of one ethnic group. Ironically it remained an autonomous province within Serbia only in word. All its authority was removed by amendments to the Serbian Constitution reintegrating both autonomous provinces and making Serbia whole again. Federal authorities more or less washed their hands of the affair and backed repressive measures against protest by deploying JNA units in Kosovo. Political leaders in the more liberal republics complained and withdrew their national contingents from the federal security forces in the province.

In Bosnia the complication arose from the diverse nature of the population there: 40 percent Muslim, 32 percent Serb and 18 percent Croat. The inhabitants of this republic were better

than others at being able to get along with each other, despite the shadow cast from other republics. In the November 1990 elections nationalist parties were successful in the almost exact proportion to the size of the ethnic community for which they stood. The three party leadership began to form a united front coalition. Bosnian political behavior seemed to imply, in spite of ethnic divisions, a kind of Bosnian identity. That identity emerged in characteristics such as communication and cooperation. The notions of independence and confederation presented danger to the Bosnians: the republic might become subject to irredentist claims from other republics. The prospect of a Serbo-Croat conflict spilling over into Bosnia could not be ignored. This was more so after it was found that Serbia's interior forces were, contrary to the constitution, active in the Bosnian Republic.⁴⁵

During 1990, the biggest factor obstructing any kind of debate was Serbia. Serbs were against all, antagonizing virtually all other sections of Yugoslavia. Only Montenegro was not at odds with Serbia. Having antagonized so many people outside Serbia, the idea gained currency in that republic that everyone was against the Serbs. Another important factor impeding the formation of independent states was defense. JNA opposed the restructure of the armed forces. Yugoslavia's arms and technology industries covered by the Ministry of Defense was responsible for a 2 billion export trade. The redistribution of these resources would represent the major problem.

The establishment of democratic practices and the pursuit of the humanitarian values contained in the documents referred to in the Kucan-Tudjman proposal for confederation were those essential to renewal and health in any future arrangement of Yugoslavia. A demonstration of tolerance and the granting of rights to minorities in sovereign republics inhabited by citizens was the best way to neutralize the impact of those, such as Milosevic, who were taking the nation, wheresoever it was to be found, as sovereign.⁴⁶ By that Milosevic claimed the right to speak for Serbs in other republics to make appeals to them, to use them for creating unrest in other republics

and to make Serbian communities part of Serbia should the federation cease. The opportunity for a break with the past was missed when Milosevic was elected on a policy of Serbianism.

In the autumn of 1990 the talks on Yugoslavia's future were stalled. The Kucan-Tudjman model about the future, confederalist Yugoslavia was rejected and Markovic's reforms program came to its end by Serbia's stealing 1.7 billion from the rest of the country.

Meanwhile, voter dissatisfaction with the economy was rising in Slovenia. The delays in reaching an agreement on an effective economic program were palpably undermining political support. Sensing this shift and the threat it implied to their objectives, radicals within the DEMOS parliamentary caucus grew increasingly impatient during the fall of 1990 with the pace of dissociation set by President Kucan, leader of the former ruling communists of Slovenia; the Slovene representative to the federal presidency, Janez Drnovsek; and the president of the Slovene parliament, liberal party leader France Bucar. In an effort to seize the political momentum before it reversed, they insisted on an immediate referendum on independence. On December 6, 1990, the Slovene parliament adopted a law to hold a plebiscite on December 23 (the same day Serbia reelected Slobodan Milosevic as president), asking Slovene voters to choose yes or no to the question, "Should the Republic of Slovenia become an autonomous and independent state?" If a majority concurred, the parliament would be obliged to adopt the decision within six months, acting as an independent state no longer part of the Yugoslav federation, the constitutional acts and interstate agreements confirming this independence and enabling the republic to join a confederation of other Yugoslav peoples if they so wished. In a turnout of 93.5 percent of the electorate, it passed with 88.5 percent.⁴⁷ On December 26, 1990, when the results were official, France Bucar, president of the parliament, proclaimed the republic an "independent state" in announcing the results to a joint session of all three chambers of parliament. The Slovene parliament declared its intent to secede from Yugoslavia in six months time if there was no progress toward a negotiated settlement of the country's future.

The major obstacle to Slovenia's independence or successful negotiation within the confederation was the EC's insistence on maintaining a single-state Yugoslavia. Without international recognition, Slovenia would be in a difficult position. Slovenia's leaders knew that the independence declaration would be meaningless, unless the international community sanctioned it. The EC position had a strong effect on talks about the future of Yugoslavia. By not admitting the possibility of transition to the loose confederation, the EC facilitated deadlock in Yugoslavia's constitutional talks. Serbia, the army, and Europe were aligned. They wanted a unitary state. Their use of violence and threat of violence against Slovenia and Croatia would be legitimized as they tried to redefine Yugoslavia.⁴⁸

Since Milosevic made dialogue meaningless, Slovenia drew up a unilateral schedule for separation. Slovenes proposed their vision of armed forces and the distribution of foreign debt among the debtors as well. However, Slovenia's leadership stressed that if Yugoslavia could offer Slovenia a secure future, Slovenes would be glad to forge closer ties with the rest of the country. It meant the end of Serbia's economic boycott, the end of Serbia's interfering and threatening to other republics, and a reasonable degree of autonomy for Albanians in Kosovo. Slovenia's leaders knew that they were playing with fire and planned for every possible scenario, including war. Since the minister of defense and his colleagues were tipped off before the JNA disarmed Slovenia's territorial defense forces, Slovenia managed to retain about 40 percent of its weapons. This was for Slovenes the base from which to build an army. Because of the threat of the war, Slovenia and Croatia did all they could to procure arms on the international markets.

Slovenia pressed ahead with independence preparations. Croats were more cautious because they were anxious not to give Belgrade an excuse to intervene. Tudjman was terrified of losing power and, as a Serb revolt in Croatia escalated, he attempted belatedly to woo Croatia's Serbs. He even gave in to Serb demands for autonomy in Krajina. However, as soon as Tudjman conceded autonomy, the Serbs upped their demands. The tactics were identical to those Milosevic used in intra-republican negotiations. The Serb revolt in Croatia was detrimental to long-term Serb

interests since it appeared to be fuelled not by the condition of Serbs in Croatia but by Milosevic's position in Belgrade. This proved true in 1995 when Croats launched their offensive into Serb held territories in Croatia and seized them almost without any fighting. Croatian's Serb army was ordered from Belgrade to move out from Croatia.⁴⁹

Centralist forces had been working to impose a state of emergency in Yugoslavia and thus legally intervene in stubborn republics for many months. On January 9, 1990, the presidency ordered that all paramilitary groups be disarmed and disbanded. This didn't, however, specify whether it meant republican territorial defense forces, police forces, or Serb insurgents. Slovenia and Croatia refused to obey, claiming that their forces were legal and the order would imply JNA rights to interfere in their domestic security. The army, in response, refrained from disarming Serbian militias in Croatia. The two republics agreed on January 17 to cooperate on matters of mutual defense and security. The centralist forces came closest to imposing the state of emergency on January 25. That evening Belgrade television showed the secret service documentary implicating Croatia's Minister of Defense, General Martin Spegelj, in an illegal arms purchase and the JNA was placed on full alert. Croatian authorities denied its authenticity. The federal military prosecutor ordered Spegelj's arrest on charges of treason for allegedly arming paramilitary forces illegally and planning attacks on military installations to kill JNA officers and their families. Instead of challenging federal authority as Slovenia had done, the Croatian government responded by giving Spegelj secret sanctuary. In this event, the JNA returned to the barracks and the presidency took no further action.⁵⁰

As the promises about better living in Serbia to win the elections proved hollow, the opposition organized a demonstration, involving half a million people in Belgrade on March 9, to protest President Milosevic monopoly control over the media and demanding his resignation. For two days Milosevic was on the verge of losing power and Yugoslav President Jovic called on the army to interpose troops between the crowds and the police to protect civil order in Serbia. In this case the general staff first resisted, but some members agreed to intervene when the police

reaction was so disproportionate that the protest turned violent, eventually lasting for four days, with two dead and hundreds more injured. They believed that demonstrations could lead to wider social unrest in Serbia and challenge the constitutional order, and therefore ordered tanks onto the streets of Belgrade for the first time since World War II. Unrest was retained in Belgrade and Milosevic kept control over the security apparatus. As soon as he succeeded in diverting anger back at Croatia, the opposition lost its momentum and the demonstrations ceased. However, the demonstrations clearly showed the undemocratic nature of the Serb regime and proved that Milosevic can rule the Serbia only by control over the security apparatus and by having constantly at hand a useful scapegoat for the declining living standard in Serbia. He and his regime were never to blame. Everybody was against the Serbs.

Following the March 9 demonstrations, centralistic forces (Milosevic, Jovic, JNA) renewed efforts to impose a state of emergency throughout Yugoslavia. On March 12, the army requested the federal state presidency to declare a state of emergency if, within 48 hours, the Slovene and Croatian governments did not implement the decisions of January 9 and disband paramilitary units and restore JNA authority over the Territorial Defense Forces (TDF) and army recruitment. The federal president was unable to declare martial law on his own because he needed the support of the rest of the presidency, and representatives from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Macedonia refused to back the move. In the opinion of the majority on the presidency, this was a legal attempt at a coup d'etat. Despite the army's attempt to sequester the members in the building, the majority of the presidency refused and the army retreated. Civilian authority prevailed, but one faction of the army, at least, had also shown its hand in defending Milosevic's rule in Serbia against domestic opposition, as if multiparty elections in December had not initiated a new era. On March 15, federal president Borisav Jovic resigned in protest, claiming that the balance of power within the presidency was leading to the break-up of the country. He was followed by members from Vojvodina and Montenegro, and to punish the representative from Kosovo who chose to vote against emergency powers, the Serbian assembly

withdrew his authority. The same night Milosevic went on Belgrade television to state that Serbia would no longer obey the federal authority in Serbia if the army was not permitted to protect the constitutional order and that he was mobilizing the police forces to avert rebellion in Kosovo and Sandzak. The next day the Serb National Council in Knin, the governing body of the "Serbian Autonomous District of Krajina," proclaimed the secession of Krajina from Croatia. Serbian Krajina was established by Croatian Serbs in August 1990 in the six municipalities around Knin. It was the response to the Croatian intention to disassociate from Yugoslavia by declaring its mirror image: that Croatian laws not in accordance with the federal constitution were invalid in their region and that they intended to dissociate from Croatia. Furthermore, Serbia's prime minister informed his assembly that Bosnian and Croatian Forces were preparing an offensive against Serbian populated towns which was a horrible disinformation.⁵¹

The attempted coup failed. Jovic returned to the presidency on March 20, withdrew his resignation without any explanation, and it was business as usual again. By the end of the month all representatives had returned to the presidency, and the presidents of the republics began their own effort at reconciliation at a series of meetings called "Yu-summits". Six summits were held in a progression of cities and republican hosts, beginning in the Croatian port town of Split on March 28, and then moving to Belgrade (Serbia), Brdo by Kranj (Slovenia), Ohrid (Macedonia), Cetinje (Montenegro), and Stojcevac near Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina) on June 6. On April 18 the presidency's group of experts ended the last obstacle to a countrywide referendum on the country's future.

Conflict in Croatia escalated in April again. It was the beginning of a pattern which was to last until autumn, when the military finally gave up all pretence of neutrality. Serb rebels attacked Croatian positions and as soon the Croatian police appeared about to reassert control, the JNA arrived to restore peace and separate the warring factions. Nonetheless, the presidency was able to adopt an action program on May 9 to resolve the intra-republican and intra-ethnic conflicts.

Confrontation between the two factions of the presidency flared up again when the annual rotation of the chair of the state presidency came due in mid-May. On May 10 the Slovene, Croatian, and part of the Kosovo delegation initiated a parliamentary protest to restore the legitimate representative of Kosovo to his seat on the presidency. Although the rotation should be a formality as every year on that date, and the office went to each federal unit on the rotation basis, Serbia's block rejected the appointment of Croatia's representative, Stipe Mesic. Their explanation was that Mesic, the first prime minister of Croatia under the HDZ, from May to August 1990, had declared his platform as president of Yugoslavia to be Croatian independence and the end of Yugoslavia. The presidency was divided and Yugoslavia was left without a head of state. Without a sitting president, the constitutional status of this collective head of state and commander in chief of the armed forces was in doubt. When the desperate mediation by Ante Markovic (prime minister) failed to break the deadlock, Slovenia, Croatia, and Macedonia left Belgrade and returned home.⁵²

On May 19 the Croatian referendum on independence was approved by 93 percent of the 83.6 percent of the electorate who chose to vote, or, in total, 79 percent. The referendum was boycotted by most Serbs in the Krajina autonomous region.⁵³

Had the issue in Yugoslavia in 1991 been the condition of Serbs in Croatia, Tudjman certainly gave Milosevic the opportunity to resolve it by bilateral talks held at Karadjordeva on March 25. He was prepared to recognize any settlement with Croatia's Serbs which was not personally humiliating, including autonomy of Krajina. Milosevic had many opportunities to reach agreement regulating the condition of Serbs in Croatia, had he desired. But imaginary enemies were the essence of his rule and, at that time, Milosevic had no desire to end the conflict with Croatia.⁵⁴

More important than what was actually happening in Yugoslavia during 1990 and in the first half of 1991 were perceptions created by the media of what was taking place. Media helped create a climate for war before any shooting started. In Serbia the media had been at war since

1987 and flames of ethnic hatred were continuously and deliberately fanned for many years, which helped to lead to war in Yugoslavia.

In Croatia most of Croatia's Serbs were, at this stage, embarrassed by Milosevic's nationalism. However, a sequence of incidents and subsequent overreactions to them played into the hands of extremists who had been doing their utmost to create conflict from the very beginning. Croatia slowly became locked in a spiral of violence, which was pushing the republic steadily towards bloodshed. Each month the conflict escalated and relations between communities deteriorated accordingly.

When the Cold War ended, Yugoslavia lost its strategic importance as a buffer state between East and West. Other regions of the world had superseded Yugoslavia's place on the ladder of international importance. Diplomats started to lose patience with the country's seemingly irrational obsessions and intractable problems. Yugoslavs looked abroad especially to the European Community, for help in the transition from communism. However, one of the requirements of EC assistance was that Yugoslavia remain a unitary state. Its insistence on a single state inadvertently contributed to the deadlock in the country's constitutional talks. By insisting on a single entity, the EC wanted what Serbia and the JNA wanted and Milosevic had no need to compromise. The Slovenes and Croats wanted to explain the reasons behind their forthcoming independence declarations. Without international support, Slovenia and Croatia believed they had no chance of persuading Milosevic in loose confederation and temper his stance. They feared to be second-class citizens in Milosevic's Yugoslavia. However, in their diplomatic efforts they found themselves repeatedly cold-shouldered and effectively ordered to return to the negotiating table in Yugoslavia. Nobody wanted to listen to their point of view and on the other hand they had already exhausted the negotiating process. They had chosen to declare independence because Milosevic's tactics made further talks pointless.

The international community launched diplomatic efforts focused on pressuring Slovenia and Croatia into abandoning their independence declarations. Though well intentioned, such

moves threatened to legitimize the use of force by the JNA. By a complete misunderstanding of the essence of Yugoslavia's crisis, diplomatic efforts failed to be successful. Rather than condemning Serb violence in Kosovo, Vojvodina, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatia or urging moderation from Serbia and the JNA, diplomatic efforts were focused on preserving Yugoslavia as a single entity. International diplomacy refused to concede even the possibility of a transition to a loose association of sovereign states. Diplomats bore the large portion of responsibility for not stopping the bloodshed while they still could.

Five days before Slovenia was due to declare independence US Secretary of State James Baker, who was on an official visit to Albania, made an unscheduled stop in Belgrade. During his one day visit he met with Yugoslavia's republican leaders and military leaders and declared that the United States would not recognize Slovenia or Croatia under any circumstances. By failing to place comparable pressure on Serbia and the JNA and to offer any negotiating room for the northern republics he passed the message, whether or not this was his intention, that the United States was prepared to accept limited military intervention in the interests of holding Yugoslavia together. Ironically the United States would have to come back to resolve the Yugoslav conflict after four years of bloodshed, offering the confederation of belligerent sides.

Slovenia declared its independence on June 25. A day later, Slovenia celebrated with an official ceremony in its capital, Ljubljana. But in the early hours of the June 27, JNA troops were already on the move. It was the beginning of the bloodiest European war since World War II.¹

Endnotes

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⁶Ibid., 15.

⁷Ibid., 17.

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¹⁰Seven Decades of Unconfronted Incongruities: The Slovenes and Yugoslavia (Princic Joze, Slovenska industrija v Jugoslovanskem primezu 1945-1956 (Novo Mesto: Dolenjska založba, 1992), 29-50.

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¹⁵Peter Vodopivec, The Slovenes and Yugoslavia, 40.

¹⁶Christoper Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 86.

¹⁷Ibid., 87.

¹⁸James Gow, Legitimacy and the Military (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 69.

¹⁹Christoper Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 89.

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- ²²Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 90.
- ²³James Gow, Legitimacy and the Military, 90.
- ²⁴Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 92.
- ²⁵*Ibid.*, 81.
- ²⁶*Ibid.*, 82.
- ²⁷*Ibid.*, 85.
- ²⁸*Ibid.*, 94.
- ²⁹Susan L. Woodward, Balkan Tragedy (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 96.
- ³⁰*Ibid.*, 92.
- ³¹Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 96-101.
- ³²*Ibid.*, 101-105.
- ³³James Gow, Legitimacy and the Military, 88.
- ³⁴Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 109.
- ³⁵James Gow, Legitimacy and the Military, 92.
- ³⁶*Ibid.*, 121.
- ³⁷Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 116-121.
- ³⁸James Gow, Legitimacy and the Military, 123.
- ³⁹*Ibid.*, 124.
- ⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 126.
- ⁴¹Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 139.
- ⁴²*Ibid.*, 137-142.
- ⁴³Milica Zorkovic Bookman, The Economic Basis of Regional Autarchy in Yugoslavia, Soviet Studies, Vol. 42, No. 1, January 1990, 93-109.
- ⁴⁴Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 126.
- ⁴⁵James Gow, Legitimacy and Military, 128.
- ⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 131.

⁴⁷ FBIS, East Europe, December 17, 1990, 68.

⁴⁸ James Gow, Military and Legitimacy, 137.

⁴⁹ Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 144.

⁵⁰ Ibid. 145.

⁵¹ Susan L. Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 137-143.

⁵² Susan L. Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 141-143.

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CHAPTER IV

WAR AND THE INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

On June 25, 1991, one day before the official declared date, the Slovene parliament proclaimed independence. Immediately after the proclamation the Republic of Slovenia took over the control of customs and frontier posts and the control of airspace over its territory.

The official celebration was scheduled in Ljubljana, the Republic of Slovenia's capital for the evening of the June 26. All day long, masses of foreign reporters gathered in Ljubljana. Reports about movements of the Italian army and a higher level of alert of armored brigades Ariette in Pordenone and Pozzuolo del Friuli in Palmanova; mechanized brigades in Udine, Trieste and Pordenone; alpine brigade in Udine, and air force units in northern Italy came to Ljubljana. Some Italian navy landing ships moved to northern Italian ports. Parts of the Austrian army were put on alert and NATO HQ for southern Europe carefully watched the situation in Slovenia. The U.S. defense attaché arrived in Ljubljana "incognito" to watch the "show".

On June 27, early in the morning at 1:15 a.m., the first unit of the JNA, a self-propelled air defense battery, crossed the Slovenian border. The column was headed to Brnik Airport via Ljubljana. At 2:45 a.m., 1st armored batalion of the 1st armored brigade left its barracks in Vrhnika near Ljubljana. It formed two columns and advanced toward Brnik Airport. The army units from set out their barracks all across Slovenia and were advancing towards frontier posts. Several armored units from JNA posts in Croatia were advancing toward Slovenia.¹

The federal army attempted to wrest control of the border and airspace from the Slovenes. It claimed that it was doing so to protect territorial unity and the integrity of Yugoslavia, which was its constitutional duty. Such an obligation existed in the Yugoslav constitution, but the

army did not receive proper authority for its action against Slovenia. It could not receive it because the body that could have given it in its capacity as the army's commander in chief, the federal presidency, was paralyzed by the non-election of Stipe Mesic as it had been in May. A purely formal procedure was blocked by Serbia. A lack of consensus required for such an action was emphasized by the fact that the presidency's Slovene member, Janez Drnovsek, had returned to Ljubljana after the proclamation of independence. Therefore constitutional authority over the army remained in doubt.

The JNA justified its operations in Slovenia by referring to a series of federal resolutions in the two weeks leading to the republic's independence declaration which had been instigated by Prime Minister Ante Markovic. What concerned Markovic was future funding for the federal government since he was aware that Slovenia planned to take control of its border crossings and to retain on to future revenue from customs and excise duties. The federal government and parliament had ignored constitutional niceties and ordered army units based in Slovenia and Croatia to assert Yugoslav sovereignty over its borders with Austria and Italy, but had not ordered a full-scale attack on Slovenia. The army claimed that the federal government had backed its action, but Markovic denied this. The bottom line is that the federal government did not have the authority to order the JNA into such an action.²

The independence declarations should be viewed within the context of eighteen months of futile dialogue on Yugoslavia's future, not in the light of subsequent military intervention. The only difference between Slovenia's status before and after the declaration of independence was the republican control of border posts and revenue from customs and excise duties. Moreover, Serbia had ceased paying its own customs and excise receipts to the federal government eight months earlier. As far as Yugoslavia's disintegration is concerned, the critical event was military intervention and not the declaration of independence.³

Slovenia provided the army with an unpleasant surprise. As JNA troops attempted to seize control of Slovenia's border posts, Slovene forces engaged them in combat. Slovenia's army was

better organized and more determined than the authorities in Belgrade had expected. The JNA general staff totally misjudged both the strength of feeling in Slovenia and the republic's military capacity. Though short of heavy weaponry, the Slovenian territorial defense proved ready and willing to engage JNA forces at every opportunity. The Slovenes manage to keep the posts they had occupied, and also succeed in preventing the JNA from occupying the Ljubljana-Brnik Airport and blocked and isolated JNA units in their advance toward Slovenia's borders. Within a few days, the Slovenes had managed to stall the army's advance and surround numerous units, and to take more than 1,500 federal officers and soldiers prisoner. They also captured a quantity of arms and equipment, including tanks and armored cars.⁴ The Slovenes were able to put up the resistance they did because of their good organization and high morale, in contrast to the JNA's lack of organization and extremely poor morale. Some soldiers were told they were being sent to fight an Austro-German invasion. Although poorly armed the Slovenes had some of their weapons because the attempt by the army high command in Belgrade to disarm Slovenia in April-May 1990 failed. Slovenia managed to retain about 40 percent of its territorial defense arms and equipment. Furthermore early in the beginning of the war the Slovenes had seized some huge JNA's depots with various arms and ammunition.

The intelligence analyses, done by the intelligence cell of the TDS headquarters on July 2, stated that the objective of the JNA armored and mechanized units was to seize Slovenia's border posts. The JNA had moved towards the border from JNA posts in Slovenia and Croatia. Because of the nature of their objective they were without sufficient infantry and logistical support. Armored units were divided into small groups and even single vehicles, advancing in several directions. Misjudged analyses of the enemy and its capabilities resulted in the absolutely defective use of armored units, an almost nonexistent concept of the logistical support of the operation, and in the use of aviation in an air show which resulted in the unexpected loss of several helicopters. JNA armored units were blocked and isolated and forced to stay in their vehicles almost without any supplies. Furthermore high daily temperatures added their part to the

impossible situation of blocked JNA units. This resulted in the use of military units which was not in accordance with the law of war. They were targeting and destroying civilian property, killing civilians and using their aviation for destroying non-military targets. It was clear that young JNA soldiers were not trained enough to effectively use heavy weapon systems and that units and their leaders were not trained for fighting in encirclement. This fact probably diverted them from using air assaults because forces which should link up with the air assaulted forces were blocked by the Slovene Territorial Defense.⁵

The official statistics about the war in Slovenia are illustrative enough. Before hostilities started, the JNA had approximately 22,300 soldiers stationed in Slovenia. During the war there were 72 engagements and JNA used 115 tanks (160 remained blocked in military posts), 82 armored infantry carriers, 24 helicopters, and 15 aviation sorties. Furthermore it used 32 self-propelled weapon systems (68 remained blocked in military posts). During the fighting 31 tanks, 22 armored infantry carriers, 172 transport vehicles, 20 all-terrain vehicles, and 6 helicopters were destroyed or put out of action. Some 3,000 short tons of explosives and 3,200 assault rifles and other weapons were confiscated. As the result of the fighting or by surrender, 58 border posts and many military posts came into Slovene hands. The JNA had 45 killed and 146 wounded. At the end of hostilities the Slovene Territorial defense had 4,836 prisoners of war; 3,090 JNA soldiers changed sides, and approximately 2,800 escaped abroad or went to their homes.⁶

At the beginning of the aggression, the Slovene Territorial Defense had 16,000 soldiers; by the end it had around 35,200. In addition the 10,000 member Slovene police force played a very important role. Furthermore, 20,000 people were included in national defense units, 100,000 of them in civilian defense units. The Slovenes had 19 killed and 182 wounded. There were 12 casualties among foreign citizens as well.⁷

Information about casualties, prisoners, and destroyed weapons systems indicate that the JNA during the Slovene war for independence was clearly defeated. JNA conscripts were not trained enough, equipped enough, nor well led to defeat Slovene Territorial Defense Forces in a

short time and with the use of force still acceptable to the international community. That the JNA performed so poorly in Slovenia was only partly a consequence of miscalculations about Slovenia's capacity to fight. The JNA was not well prepared and its whole doctrine was based on fighting and disabling the invading enemy. The JNA was not trained to fight its own people, the internal enemy. More fundamentally, there was a lack of morale among JNA troops and a reckless lack of preparation on the part of the high command. Finally JNA units did not achieve their initial objectives in the form of limited intervention and the international community was not prepared to sanction any widespread operation.

The government of Slovenia immediately after the invasion contacted the European Community (EC) presidency and asked for intervention. On June 27, Dimitrij Rupel, minister of foreign affairs, wrote a letter to Helmut Liederman, who headed the Vienna office of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). He also wrote a letter to the governments of the CSCE. In these letters he explained that newly independent Slovenia had been a victim of military aggression. He quoted the menacing statements of the JNA generals, and revealed their plan to capture the Ljubljana Airport so they could fly in reinforcements. He complained about the breach of the CSCE norms by the Yugoslav army, and defined their actions as illegal. A document signed by President Kucan with the title "Slovenia in a State of war" was produced and sent out. Ljubljana was full of foreign correspondents who immediately informed the main TV stations about the events. In advance of its independence declaration Slovenia made meticulous preparation. An efficient, well equipped press center was set up beneath Cankarjev Dom, the cultural center where 28 months earlier the republic's communist leaders had first challenged Milosevic, and foreign journalists were provided with as much information and access to Slovene decision makers as they could want. It was the finest example how to deal with the media on a mutual cooperation level. So professional was Slovenia's media campaign and so consummate the victory that journalists joked that the last barricades to come down in Slovenia were those around the Cankarjev Dom press center which kept the media in.

The European mediation took place at the end of June and the beginning of July, twice in Zagreb and once on Brioni. EC foreign policy was guided by each of the community's countries in turn for six-month periods on a rotational basis. To improve continuity the current community president forms a "troika" with its predecessor and successor. When war broke out in Slovenia Luxembourg was head of EC foreign policy while Italy and the Netherlands made up the rest of the troika. On July 1 Luxembourg handed over the presidency to the Netherlands and Portugal replaced Italy within the troika. Mediators were three foreign ministers: Gianni de Michelis from Italy (the previous president), Jacques Poos from Luxembourg (president until the end of June), and Hans Van der Broek (president for the July-December period). They helped Slovenes to arrange a cease-fire and the withdrawal of Yugoslav troops. In their first meeting with Slovene representatives in Zagreb, on June 28, President of the Republic Milan Kucan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Dimitrij Rupel represented the Slovene side and asked the Slovene delegation to reverse the independence process. Poos proposed that Slovenes should "freeze" the implementation of the declaration of independence for three months. The EC also wanted the Croatian member of the Yugoslav presidency, Stipe Mesic, to assume the presidential powers which were denied to him by the Serbs. There was a lot of discussion about whether the Slovene side had committed an illegal act by declaring independence, but at the end the EC accepted that Slovenes were willing to negotiate with Markovic and that they could not agree to anything else without prior consultation with the Slovene parliament. For the Slovene delegation the decision about independence was irreversible and such behavior was approved by the Slovene parliament.

Before the second Zagreb meeting the Slovene delegation received Markovic. He was worried because of the blockade of the JNA barracks in Ljubljana. He threatened the Slovenes with full operation by the army. At the second meeting in Zagreb, Slovene delegation heard a changed version of the EC conditions: establishment of the status quo ante. Then, the Belgrade government would reconsider its options. De Michelis told Dimitrij Rupel in private, "You wait for three months, then you are free! But the Croats are in a different position!"⁸

The next day Dimitrij Rupel discussed the situation over the phone with De Michelis, Van der Broek, Mock, Genscher, and Hurd. He informed them about the movement of troops. The Slovenes decided to continue with the blockade of the barracks, since this was a warranty against further attacks from the outside. After that Kucan and Rupel met with Hans Dietrich Genscher in Klagenfurth. They informed him about the situation, and he promised to talk to his colleagues. Dimitrij Rupel believes that his contribution and influence on European policy were vital.⁹

At the July 7 meeting on Brioni, the EC and the parties involved in the Yugoslavian crisis arrived at the following agreements:

1. The control of the border passages would be in the hands of the Slovene police, who would work in accordance with federal norms.
2. Customs would be collected by Slovene customs officials, but they will be put in a separate account controlled by federal and republican ministers of finance plus foreign controllers.
3. Air traffic will be under federal control.
4. The organization of border security will gradually develop according to European norms (i.e., no army on the borders).
5. The cease-fire will be accompanied by removal of the blockades around the barracks, the JNA was to return to its barracks, all roads would be freed of barricades, the Territorial Defense will be deactivated, and the weapons returned to their original owners.
6. The prisoners will be released.

The chief negotiator, Dutch minister Van der Broek, ruled the negotiations in such a way that neither side would feel satisfied. One of the key elements and a very important one for Slovenia was the arrival of European monitors who would supervise the agreement's implementation.

Most Slovenes were reluctant to accept the Accord, which included a three-month moratorium on independence, and it took some effort from Slovene President Milan Kucan to persuade the republic's parliament to sign it. Slovenia agreed to stop further implementation of

the declaration of independence for three months, and the Yugoslav side promised to stop hostilities. Eleven days later, on July 18, the JNA decided unilaterally to pull out all its troops and equipment within three months. The three-month moratorium on independence was designed to buy time to give Yugoslavia's leaders a second chance to resolve their differences, but in the absence of any new mechanism for conflict resolution the odds against a negotiated settlement of the country's future were greater than ever.¹⁰

At Brioni, the Slovene delegation (Kucan, Peterle, Bucar, Drnovsek, Rupel) did not know how to get rid of the Yugoslav army. The interesting piece of information was the conversation of Janez Drnovsek, the former Slovene member of the federal presidency, with Serbian representative Borisav Jovic. The Serbian only problem was how to allow the army to save face. The Serbian politicians were far ahead of the Serbian generals. The main reason for the withdrawal of the Yugoslav troops was the confusion created by the fleeing of practically all Slovene and the majority of Croatian recruits from the JNA units to join the Slovene and Croat ones.¹¹ The JNA found itself in a position of being the occupiers, something for which it was not prepared. The decision for a withdrawal of all its units from the territory of Slovenia was therefore a necessity, not an option.

Susan L. Woodward in her book *Balkan Tragedy* offers a different explanation. Her opinion is that the events can be interpreted with the rapidity with which the conflict had evolved, the absence of policy for such a contingency, and the general confusion over appropriate action when political disintegration creates doubt about constitutionality and legality. She cites the memoirs of Minister of Defense Colonel General Veljko Kadijevic, in which he suggests a clear destination between the first two days of JNA action, when it was executing an explicit government policy based on a court decision that the Slovene actions were unconstitutional, and the following days, when it began to react to direct attacks on JNA units and a blockade of all JNA units and facilities (that is not in line with the facts because TDS forces engaged the JNA units and blockaded their facilities on the very first day of the aggression).

Prime Minister Markovic denied even the first mandate, although the parliament and cabinet did so decide, by citing the facts that only the state presidency had the authority to order the army and that it was disabled by the refusal of the Serbian voting bloc to seat Mesic. In this part this author agrees with Woodward. Kadijevic also argues that the general staff had no choice but to act, for if it had refused to execute its part of the task of the political decisions of the Parliament of the SFRJ, then that could be the end of the army as the worst possible case.¹² This shows the amazing lack of political reality on behalf of General Kadijevic because the army at the time was not the Yugoslav army anymore but more or less the army of one nation, serving the political goals of Serb nation.

Woodward continues that the evidence of confusion can be found in the behavior of local commanders, such as those who ignored orders to hold their fire and the commander Novo Mesto on the Zagreb-Ljubljana highway who shot one of his own officers for protesting his engagement against local units of the territorial defense. She concludes that such local showdowns helped to raise the number of casualties on both sides and helped to persuade popular and foreign opinion of JNA ferocity and ineptitude. The logical conclusion of her writing is therefore that Slovenes had bombed their homes with airplanes, and looted Gornja Radgona by themselves, and that many casualties on the JNA side were caused by their commanders.

All of these actions and views suggest that ambiguity of the JNA over whether Slovenia was still a part of the country, and the goal was to keep it in, or whether it was lost. The question was settled, according to Kadijevic, by the facts on the ground. The army "found itself in an impossible situation," because all Slovenes saw it as an occupation army, which the army did not want to be. Furthermore, the dispersion of the officer corps to Slovenia, Croatia, and in part in Macedonia and the increasing difficulty with mobilizing soldiers (less than half reported and the territory for recruitment was narrowing daily) were threatening the JNA's ability to perform its task elsewhere, especially in Croatia. Although the general staff debated three options on how to

leave Slovenia, this decision and the dispute within the government were interrupted by the EC intervention. Three options were:

1. Defeat Slovene military formations and then withdraw, an operation requiring six to eight days and using more airpower.
2. Use all available military force to coerce compliance to the rulings concerning the border, and accept the possibility of substantial civilian casualties.
3. Combine political means with the threat of JNA resources to achieve political goals.

The general staff preferred the first option and excluded the second.¹³ It is clear how humiliated after the JNA performance in Slovenia the generals were. Their driving power was revenge and their wish was to come even with the "second level" TDS. It is questionable whether the JNA at the time was capable of defeating the TDS. Facts speak against that option. The JNA's doctrine at the time was the so called General People Defense (GPD), and was based on the presumption of fighting with the invasion from abroad, with an outside enemy. Territorial defense units were a vital part of that doctrine and everything, most important the logistical support, was based on the cooperation with local communities and population. Without that support, as it proved in Slovenia, the JNA was helpless and not able to fight for a longer time. Moreover, its morale was on the ground, and young conscripts were not trained enough nor prepared to die for the political adventures of their generals. The JNA would need substantial time to change its doctrine, retrain units, and to fundamentally reorganize its army in an ethnically clean, Serb army. But time was the last thing they had. After failing to persuade Slovenes with the military force in a short time and after the intervention of the international community, its only viable option was to pull out from Slovenia and reorganize.

After persistent and tiresome lobbying with European and other governments, Slovenia managed to project the image of a peaceful and cooperative country, distinct from the rest of the former Yugoslavia republics. Slovenes managed to attract a positive response from the United States and the United Nations. Slovenia was recognized by the United States on April 7, and

joined the United Nations on May 22, 1992. Slovenia became active in the CSCE and in the Visegrad group of former communist Central European countries, as well as in a series of bilateral arrangements.¹⁴

In the summer of 1990, when the Slovene and Croat projects for creating sovereign states were on a collision course with the several proposals to redefine constitutional order of Yugoslavia and when the first conflicts between Serbs and members of other nations in the mixed population areas of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina started, Western powers were in a euphoric mood. There were problems, notably appeals from Eastern Europe for membership in the European Community and for new European security arrangements to replace the vacuum left by the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, an unresolved global debt crisis, doubts about the commitment to reform in the Soviet Union, and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. But these were seen as only transitional problems that resulted from the positive trends of European integration, German unification, and the end of the superpower confrontation.¹⁵

The inability of making a compromise about Yugoslavia's future and the first armed clashes in Croatia in the late 1990 brought warnings from diplomats, scholars, and intelligence agencies about the danger of Yugoslavia's violent disintegration. But at the time the prospects did not seem to present any threat to the interests of major powers, and the eyes of international diplomacy were focused on the Iraqi invasion and future events in the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia and its fate were simply not significant.

One of the "early birds" in sounding the first alarm was the Austrian foreign minister, Alois Mock. For more than a year before the JNA's aggression on Slovenia he toured European capitals with urgent appeals to recognize the impending Yugoslav crisis. But political leaders and bureaucrats in the European Community were persuaded that the world had changed and they dismissed the warnings of their foreign offices. At the same time, both the Slovene and the Croatian governments were sending their respective foreign ministers and governmental delegations abroad, seeking help and trying to explain the real nature of the crises in Yugoslavia,

but they were usually cold-shouldered by foreign ministers. The only outspoken support for Slovenian independence at the time came from Austria.

The greatest diplomatic error in Yugoslavia was made before the conflict degenerated into war. This was the failure to listen to anything but the Serbian point of view and thus not understanding the nature of the evolving crises. Here Britain was the greatest offender. While other EC countries sent their diplomats to Croatia and Slovenia as soon as war broke out, the Foreign Office, throughout six months of fighting, chose not to send a single diplomat to Zagreb.

States and diplomats monitoring Yugoslavia during 1990 and the first half of 1991 were not interested in a just settlement within the country; they were simply looking for a way of holding it together. There was fear that the disintegration of Yugoslavia would reopen a number of old territorial disputes involving virtually all of the neighbors. There was another consideration on the minds of Western politicians. It was that Croatia's and Slovenia's secession would set precedents for secessionist elsewhere (Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union) as well as close at home (France, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom). Another element of Western policy toward Yugoslavia in 1990-91 was the capacity of the federal government to service its foreign debt and that of its republics. The international banking community considered it vital to the restructuring and repayment of the Yugoslav foreign debt that the central government be strengthened and the republican governments act as a group. Bankers could continue to hold the federal government responsible for its guarantee of that debt and the republican banks for their mutually guaranteed debt. They believed that the economies of all the republics were likely to be too small to generate growth sufficient to service current and future lending.¹⁶

Given that both Milosevic's Serbia and the JNA were committed to a unitary state, they appeared to represent the best opinion. Furthermore, the international community didn't agree on the nature of a crises and there was a lot of competing national interests and domestic disagreements among Western countries. British politicians, in particular, attempted to explain a Bosnian war as the consequence of the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, forced by Germany.

This interpretation said more about the prevalence of anti-German prejudice in Great Britain than any superior British understanding of Yugoslavian affairs. On the other hand, top officials in the United States chose to override the advice of the State Department to the extent that the senior diplomat on the Yugoslavian desk, George Kennedy, resigned in protest. Policy came from a people in a State Department, who had an unusual expertise. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger had been a second secretary in Belgrade from 1962-65, and an ambassador to Yugoslavia in 1977-81. He spoke Serbo-Croat fluently, had close contacts within the country, and during the time he was ambassador he got to know Slobodan Milosevic, then a banker and a man he believed the United States could do business with. The director of the National Security Council, Brent Scowcroft, had been assistant air attaché at the U.S. embassy in Belgrade from 1959-61 and had written his doctoral dissertation on the country. Their assessment more than a decade later formed the backbone of U.S. policy on Yugoslavia. The State Department strongly supported the Serb federal option to the extent that when Secretary of State James Baker flew to Belgrade on June 21, 1991, he ordered Slovenia and Croatia to abandon their planned independence declarations rather than exert comparable pressure on Serbia. Furthermore, the lack of U.S. leadership toward the Yugoslav crisis could be explained with Eagleburger's and Scowcroft's private business ventures in Yugoslavia, conducted in the period between their diplomatic careers and their return to governmental service, which had already threatened public embarrassment over possible conflicts of interests.¹⁷

Westernization and eventual membership in Europe was one of the driving issues behind the Yugoslav conflict. Both the federal government and Slovene and Croatian politicians had been actively seeking explicit support from European institutions and governments for their separate programs. On March 13, 1991, the European Parliament passed a resolution declaring that "the constituent republics and autonomous provinces of Yugoslavia must have the right freely to determine their own future in a peaceful and democratic manner and on the basis of recognized international and internal borders." While most European governments continued to support the

federal government and insist that the Yugoslavs stay together. it was well known by then that Germany had already joined the ranks of Austria, Hungary, and Denmark in at least covert support and encouragement of Slovene and Croatian independence. Italy, by contrast, remained in an ambivalent position. The Italian foreign minister, Gianni De Michelis, was particularly active in promoting EC involvement to manage the crisis. This included his strong support for a united Yugoslavia.

EC president Delors and the prime minister of Luxembourg, Jacques Santer, visited Belgrade on May 29-30 and made a commitment to the territorial integrity and international borders of Yugoslavia. Delors also promised to request 4.5 billion in aid from EC in support of the Yugoslav commitment to political reform. This was conditioned by implementing a market economy, democratization, a peaceful dialog on a constitutional solution, a respect for minority rights, and the seating of Stipe Mesic as presiding chair of the collective presidency. The offer included the added condition that Yugoslavia remain united, a single state.¹⁸ But by this stage Markovic no longer had any influence. A year and a half earlier, when he launched his reform program, financial aid might have made a difference but, at the time, no money was forthcoming.

By early June, Italy began to reverse its foreign policy. Italian president Francesco Cossiga made public Italy's sympathy for Slovene and Croatian independence. But sympathies or covert support were not enough. All Western European institutions were still supporting Yugoslavia as a single state. On June 20, 1991, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe reiterated support for Yugoslavia's continued territorial integrity and on June 23, EC foreign ministers voted unanimously not to recognize the independence of Slovenia and Croatia if they seceded unilaterally from Yugoslavia.¹⁹ On June 21, four days before the Slovenian and Croatian declarations of independence, a flurry of diplomatic activity reached its climax by US Secretary of State James Baker briefly visiting Belgrade. He was on his way from the first meeting of the CSCE Council of Ministers in Berlin to Tirana to celebrate US recognition of Albania after 52 years. He declared the United States unwilling to recognize an independent

Slovenia and Croatia, calling any unilateral secession illegal and illegitimate. He also told Serbian president Milosevic that if there came a choice between democracy and unity, the United States would choose democracy. Because James Baker insisted on Yugoslav territorial integrity and unity, and at the same time reiterated publicly that the United States would not use military force to support this position, he was giving a green light to the army to intervene.

Observers of Western policy in this critical period, when there was both opportunity for negotiation and its necessity, argue that the EC and the United States took a strong and consistent stand against Yugoslav dissolution in the spring, placing their concern for stability in the region in the short run above the reality of Yugoslavia as a confederation. They criticize this US-EC position for denying the rights of Slovenes and Croats to self-determination and, in ignoring the inevitability of Yugoslavia's demise, encouraging Serbia and the army and thus causing the tragedy that unfolded.

Another problem was the inconsistency of Western policy toward Yugoslavia. Competing national interests and domestic disagreements among Western states led to ambiguity and mixed messages to the involved sides. Some of them could be understood as supporting Slovenia and Croatia, the others for the federal policy and army intervention. In spite of noble intentions of international diplomacy, that is to promote a peaceful solution of the Yugoslav crisis, the international community showed an amazing lack of understanding of the nature of the crisis and fearful impotency and helplessness in solving complex political problems. As the EC became fully involved, the Yugoslav problem became totally affected by the internal politics of Western integration, by the bargain of their Maastricht Treaty, by the competition over potential spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, and by the heightened sensitivity within the EC to the potential power and influence of a united Germany.²⁰

The outbreak of armed conflict galvanized the EC into action and the United States gladly left Yugoslav affairs to the EC. The European initiative suited the U.S. position on Yugoslavia in many ways, for policymakers were unwilling to commit substantial U.S. resources or any troops

to an area no longer of vital strategic interest. Moreover, the main motive for the US urging for greater European participation was to ensure Europe's responsibility for the transition in Eastern Europe.²¹

Under the EC mechanism for intergovernmental cooperation on foreign policy and an Italian proposal, the European Political Cooperation (EPC) of the Council of Ministers, the foreign ministers of the sitting "troika," met on June 28 with Prime Minister Markovic, Foreign Minister Loncar, and the republican presidents of Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia. The European mediation took place at the end of June and the beginning of July: twice in Zagreb and once in Brioni. Meanwhile, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd announced a change in policy, saying that the United Kingdom did not support the use of force. On June 30, US Deputy Secretary of State Eagleburger said that the United States supported sovereign republics and the idea of Yugoslav confederation.²² On July 5, using one of the few instruments it had to influence the conflict, the EC aimed sanctions at the federal government by suspending almost 1 billion in economic aid and imposing an embargo on arms exports to Yugoslavia. This all resulted in the signing of the decisive Brioni Agreement on the July 7, which paved the way for Slovenian international recognition. With a mandate from the CSCE to deploy 30 to 50 observers, named "ice-cream men" for the white uniforms they wore, to Slovenia to observe the cease-fire, the EC began its first ever effort at peacekeeping. At the same time, Germany's proposal that Slovenia and Croatia be recognized was shelved in the EC. Germany's argument that recognition would act as a deterrent against further army attacks both in Slovenia and Croatia was not accepted by its EC partners. Throughout July and August, fighting spread in Croatia to various parts of the republic.

The European Community's four month long job as mediator effectively ended in November when the UN became the center of the next stage of international efforts concerning Yugoslavia. In September the United Nations had passed a resolution calling for peace in Yugoslavia and instructing all members to observe an embargo on arms exports to all sides in the conflict. Ironically, by their actions, both the EC and the UN ensured that the imbalance in

firepower became a permanent feature of the conflict. The fundamental reason for the fighting in Yugoslavia in September 1991 was the imbalance in firepower between the Serbs and the JNA on the one hand, and the other peoples on the other.

In October, the UN's special envoy, Cyrus Vance, visited Yugoslavia to study the possibility of sending a peacekeeping force there. Both Serbia and Croatia agreed to the stationing of UN peacekeeping forces in various areas of Yugoslavia. The way was cleared for such a force by vote in the Security Council. But despite the agreement in principle to such a force by the federal government, the governments of Serbia and Croatia, and the federal army, the plan hit a number of snags toward the end of 1991. Deadlock within the EC over what to do next, and apparent inability of the UN to intervene, led to a confrontation between Germany and most of the other EC members at a meeting in Brussels on December 16.

Germany reinstated its proposal for immediate recognition of Croatia, Slovenia, and any other republics that asked for it. It argued that recognition could give a clear signal to the army and the Serbs that their campaign against Croatia could not succeed in the long run, because the world would not accept the territorial gains made by Serbia by force. Germany's EC partners did not agree to the proposed timing. They argued that recognition at that moment would undermine the UN's peacekeeping effort as well perhaps provoke the Serbs and the army into extending the war into Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. These critics received support from President Bush, UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, and Cyrus Vance. Nevertheless, after a nine-hour meeting of EC foreign ministers, Britain backed down in return for earlier German concessions over the Maastricht Treaty on European Union. To maintain a united facade the EC agreed the recognition would not occur before January 15, 1992, and established a five-member judicial commission, under the French constitutional lawyer Robert Badinter, to consider applications from any Yugoslav republic seeking independence. Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and, Macedonia all applied.

Germany, which had already angered Serbia by introducing back in November a ban on trade links with Serbia and Montenegro as aggressors in the war against Croatia, announced on December 23 that it had recognized Slovenia and Croatia and that it was only postponing the formal exchange of ambassadors until January 15. Germany's recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in advance of the January 15 deadline for EC countries appeared not to have hindered the peace process under UN auspices, but rather helped it. The war on the territory of Croatia drew to a close in early 1992, with the future shape of the rest of the former Yugoslav federation still unclear.²³

Slovenia was recognized by the rest of the EC countries on the January 15, 1992, by the United States on April 7, 1992, and it became a member of the UN on May 22, 1992.

Endnotes

- ¹Janez Jansa, Premiki (Ljubljana: Maldinska knjiga, 1992), 154-161.
- ²F. Stephen Larrabee, The Volatile Powder Keg, (Washington D.C. : The American University Press, 1994), 101-104.
- ³Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 158.
- ⁴F. Stephen Larrabee, The Volatile Powder Keg, 101-104.
- ⁵Janez Jansa, Premiki, 202-206.
- ⁶Janez J. Svajncer, Vojna in vojaska zgodovina Slovencev, (Ljubljana: Presernova druzba, 1992), 210-215.
- ⁷*Ibid.*, 210-215.
- ⁸Jill Benderly and Evan Kraft, Independent Slovenia (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), Dimitrij Rupel: Slovenia's Shift from the Balkans to Central Europe.
- ⁹*Ibid.* 183-199.
- ¹⁰Christopher Bennet, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 160.
- ¹¹Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenia's Shift from the Balkans to Central Europe, 183-199.
- ¹²Susan L. Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 167.
- ¹³*Ibid.* 462.
- ¹⁴Dimitrij Rupel, Slovenia's Shift from the Balkans to Central Europe, 193.
- ¹⁵Susan L. Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 148.
- ¹⁶*Ibid.*, 158.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*, 155.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*, 160.
- ¹⁹Christopher Bennett, Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse, 175.
- ²⁰Susan L. Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, 162.
- ²¹*Ibid.*, 158.
- ²²*Ibid.*, 165.

²³Stephen Larrabe. The Volatile Powder Keg (Washington D.C.: The American University Press, 1994), 101-104.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

What ultimately happened in Yugoslavia in 1991 was anticipated as early as 1915 by farsighted and well informed experts who knew the Balkans and the South Slav nations. The French scholar Louis Leger, who predicted the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the rise of Yugoslavia in his 1915 book *La Liquidation de l'Autriche-Hongrie*, maintained that an Illyrian Federation could only be successful if it were organized as some form of Slavic Switzerland, composed of autonomous cantons, which would be made up of the Slovenian lands, Croatia, Dalmatia, central Serbia, and Bosnia and Hercegovina. Belgrade as the seat of the central government, should have had the same role as Bern in the Helvetian community. As a first rate authority on the South Slav lands, he was well aware of the great social, economic, cultural, and historical differences between the peoples who were destined to be united in a common Yugoslav state. But he was also aware that these peoples have, for the most part, already established social and national political communities that would strive to preserve and develop their national individuality in the new South Slavic state framework.¹

Contrary to the popular interpretation, Yugoslavia's disintegration was not the product of inherent and irrational ethnic animosities and centuries of strife that inevitably boiled over into the carnage of the early 1990s. The roots of the conflict could be traced directly to late 1980s when Slobodan Milosevic rose to power in Serbia. Serbian society was systematically purged, and the media were brought firmly under political control. He launched a highly successful campaign of media indoctrination to stir up Serb nationalist sentiment and created the new Serb nationalism paving the way for forthcoming ethnical conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

This author's opinion is that the ethnic conflict in the former Yugoslavia is a consequence of the collapse of the federal state and not the other way around which is the prevailing view, seen in the media and heard in many political discussions. The ethnic conflict is not endemic or inevitable to South Slav nations. The Yugoslav society was predisposed towards conflict because of its historical background and socioeconomic reasons; however, people do not fight simply because of different ethnicity or religion. The conflict in the former Yugoslavia is rather a product of irresponsible political elites who had played "the ethnical card."

Slovene willingness to live with other South Slav people in a common state was, after 1918 as well as after 1945, an indisputable fact. It is also a fact that Yugoslavia did not fall apart because of lack of unity. It happened because of intolerance and, even more, Serbian incapacity to accept Yugoslavia's ethnic and cultural diversity as a reality and a benefit.²

In 1913 Ivan Cankar, a Slovene writer, in a lecture titled "Slovenes and Yugoslavs," said about Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs: "By blood we are brothers; by language cousins; but by culture, which is the fruit of the separate upbringing of several centuries-there we are less familiar to one another than one of our Upper Carniolan peasants to a Tiroler."

Cankar thought at the time that the so-called Yugoslav question was exclusively a political one. "If South Slav nations think that they will profit from forming a new state and live together then let things happen according to their wish."³ But his opinion was that the state they will create should be a federal one with equal rights to all constitutive elements and with appreciation for different ethnic, social, economic, and cultural landscape from their nations.

Attempts of Serbia's leadership to recentralize Yugoslavia was preventing the country from following Eastern Europe in abandoning communism. As the result, by the middle of 1989 most Slovenes had come to the conclusion that Yugoslavia had precious little left to offer them, whereas they had a lot to lose by remaining part of the country. The Slovene leadership decided that it could not stem the tide of democracy and opted for a multiparty system. Leaders began to espouse a confederate arrangement in which each republic could choose its own form of

government. Republics which desired to remain communist could do so, while others would be free to abandon communism. The question for Slovenes was whether their future status would be established within or outside a federal state. Slovenes preferred to stay in Yugoslavia, but only in a confederate one. The federation was not an option. Since Milosevic made dialogue about the future of Yugoslavia meaningless, Slovenia drew up a unilateral schedule for separation. However, Slovenia's leadership stressed that if Yugoslavia could offer Slovenia a secure future, Slovenes would be glad to forge closer ties with the rest of the country. Slovene independence was in this sense not a cause of Yugoslav disintegration, but rather a result of it.

Slovenes calculations about their independence and survival from Yugoslavia proved to be correct, which is not the case in the rest of the former Yugoslavia. There are at least three main contributing factors for Slovenia's success which are mentioned in this thesis: ethnic homogeneity, economic development and a strong civil society.

What are the prospects of Slovenia in the future? Slovenian independence appears to have opened the way to Europe, which was closed in the former Yugoslavia because of its inability to meet EC human rights and political democratic conditions. Close cooperation with EFTA and the EU have already begun and Slovenes hope that they will become a full member of the EU in the near future. The results of Slovene independence and its shift toward a market economy are clear enough. With its GNP per capita of 6.940, unemployment rate and inflation within the limits of EC norms, Slovenia is the richest postcommunist state.

Slovenia's problems are in many ways typical, although not in the same degree, of the problems of all postcommunist states of eastern Europe. One can only hope that Slovenia will succeed with its shift to a democratic society and market economy. For the time being, prospects for the "story of success" are really good.

Endnotes

¹Peter Vodopivec, The Slovenes and Yugoslavia (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1994), 24.

²Ibid., 44.

³Ivan Cankar, Zbrano delo (Ljubljana: Drzavna Zalozba Slovenije, 1977).

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